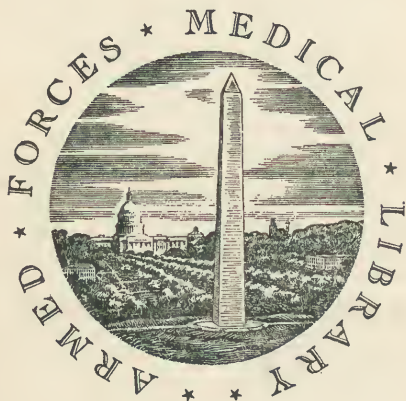


UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



FOUNDED 1836

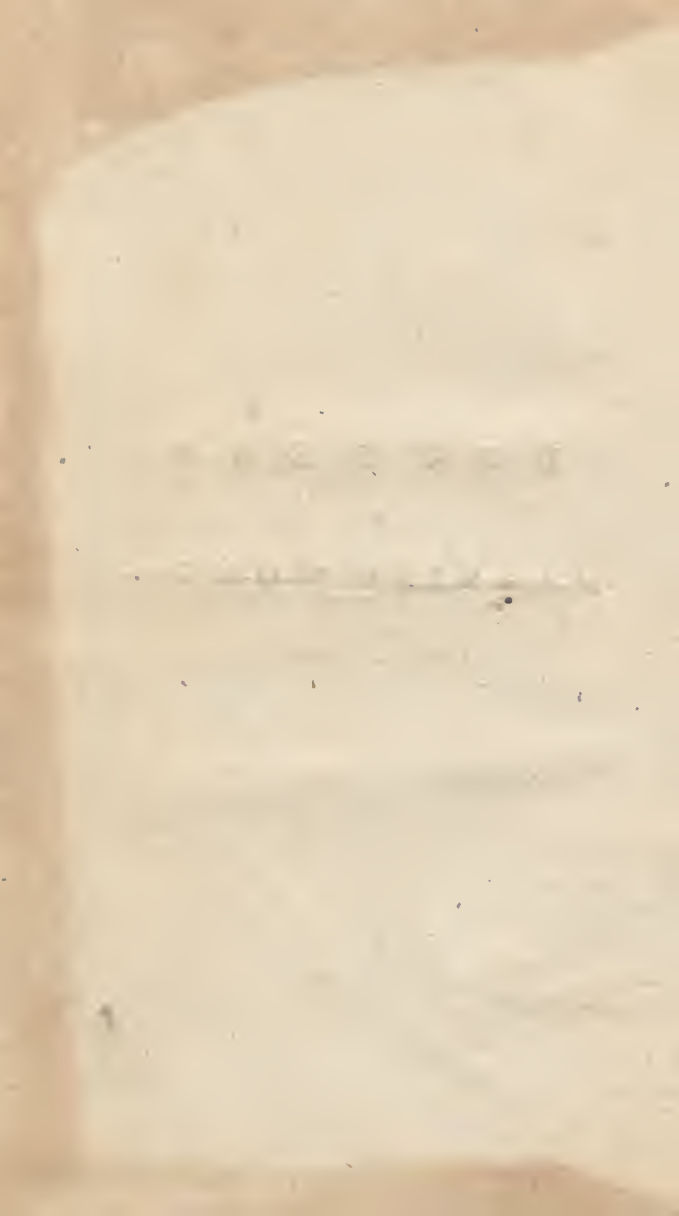
WASHINGTON, D.C.

15.



L E T T E R S
T O
M A R R I E D W O M E N.

[Price 3s. 6d. bound.]



L E T T E R S
T O
MARRIED WOMEN.

The FOURTH EDITION,

Revised, and considerably enlarged.

By HUGH SMITH, M.D.

L O N D O N.

Printed for the AUTHOR;

And sold by G. KEARSLEY, No. 46, Fleet Street.

MDCCLXXXV.

AR 15 May 52

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT would be ungrateful not to acknowledge the Candour with which the Public have been pleased to receive this little Volume, although it contains some Doctrines repugnant to the present Opinions: The honorary Degree which a respectable University were pleased to confer upon the Author as a Token of their Approbation, demands likewise his Acknowledgment, and emboldens the Doctor to hope that his Observations are not entirely erroneous.

With a View, then, to promote the Happiness and Comfort of his Fellow-Creatures, and to preserve helpless Infants from their present almost certain Destruction, Dr. SMITH earnestly recommends the Perusal of these Letters to such Persons as are likely to have a young Family; to those whose Duty may require their Attendance in a sick Chamber; and likewise to Invalids.

The Maxims insisted on throughout are agreeable to the Laws of Nature; and the

Author trusts that he has rendered them evident to common Sense : They are the Result of an assiduous Attention to the Duties of his Profession ; and it may with Truth be added, that they have the further Sanction of successful Experience.

It is only necessary to observe, that the Treatise, according to a Promise, made some Years ago in the Family Physician, is dedicated to the Ladies, under the Title of Letters to Married Women : And as a familiar Style is aimed at, it is presumed that the Digressions will not only be thought allowable, but even a Relief to the Subject itself, naturally dry and unentertaining.

If the Opinion with respect to those Marks which are incident to Children should be supposed chimerical, yet the Design, it is hoped, will prove a sufficient Apology. Perhaps it may induce some others to pursue the Enquiry, and thereby fully illustrate the Fact ; in which Case the Author will give up his Opinion, as freely as he now delivers it to the Public.

INTRODUCTION.

IN considering my intended subjects, the familiar style of letter-writing appeared the most eligible; and particularly, when I reflected upon the absurdity of using terms of art, in an address to the ladies. The three first letters will not, I hope, be esteemed foreign to my purpose, as they seem to me altogether introductory to the design. I was induced to add the last letter, upon old age, in order to make the series of letters complete; having now, in this collection, taken up man from the first period of his existence, and carried him through the various stages of life.

It being much to our present purpose, and intimately connected with the following letters, I shall transcribe a part of the introduction to the eighth edition of the Family Physician, published about twelve months ago.

vi INTRODUCTION.

“ Experience in physic is the wisest path to tread ; and considering what poor crazy constitutions too many of the human race unhappily sustain, and the various disorders which even the most robust are liable to, no one can be too particular in remarking such innocent remedies as may relieve slight indispositions, and consequently prevent terrible and fatal diseases.

“ Good nursing is a point which has either been too much neglected, or mistaken ; nevertheless it is of the first consequence towards the cure of diseases, and the preserving of delicate and feeble constitutions. It is equally so to render advanced age easy and comfortable ; and to preserve helpless infants. To speculative minds it must be matter of astonishment to observe the fatality amongst children, which the following table of births and infant-burials, collected from the bills of mortality, presents for their serious consideration.

INTRODUCTION. vii

	Total number of births.	Burials under 5 years of age.	Burials under 2 years of age.
In 1762	15351	10659	8372
1763	15133	11163	8200
1764	16801	9699	7673
1765	16374	9948	8073
1766	16257	10197	8035
1767	15980	9489	7668
1768	16042	10670	8229
1769	16714	10061	8016
1770	17109	10121	7994
1771	17072	9447	7617
	<hr/> 10)162833	<hr/> 10)101454	<hr/> 10)79877
	<hr/> 16283	<hr/> 10145	<hr/> 7987
	The average upon the last ten years.		

“ Thus we see that almost two thirds of the children born in this metropolis and its environs are intirely lost to society : 16283 are, upon the average, the annual births ; 10145 the infant-burials ; and, what deserves particular attention, 7987 are cut off before they are two years old, which is more than three fourths of those children who die under five years of age. How ardently therefore is it to be wished that such a fatality could be prevented !—it may be prevented.

“ Is it not affecting, that so many beings, just entering into life, should be so

viii INTRODUCTION.

untimely cut off, to the detriment of society, and the affliction of their weeping mothers? It is, truly, a subject of commiseration, a scene which draws a silent tear from the eye of humanity, and pierces the wounded bosoms of afflicted parents. — Above three fourths of these little innocents fall a sacrifice under two years old. It is well known, that the thrush and watery gripes generally terminate their existence in the early months; and, if they survive these maladies, the time of teething too frequently brings on a fatal catastrophe.

“ Could we but conquer the prejudices of the times, and abolish unnatural and absurd practices; could we but restore that natural and simple method of rearing children, which the all-wise Giver of life has sufficiently pointed out; did we but confine them to that nutriment which HE has prepared for their first state of existence; and consult that reason which HE has bestowed upon us to conduct them forwards—all would be well. But alas, in-

INTRODUCTION. ix

dolence and luxury forbid the task! Nevertheless, to the rational few the following remarks are submitted.

“ The thrush and watery gripes are, in the author’s opinion, artificial diseases, and both of them totally occasioned by improper food; such as all kinds of pap, whether made from flour, bread, or biscuit: they all cause too much fermentation in an infant’s stomach, and irritate their tender bowels beyond what Nature can support. This appears to him to be the evident cause of the before-mentioned complaints.

“ When infants are past this period, the danger in cutting their teeth is justly to be feared. This difficulty proceeds altogether from a weakness of constitution, arising from the same first mismanagement in point of diet: and here a train of dreadful symptoms present themselves; the head, the stomach, the bowels, are all at times terribly affected; a general wasting

x • INTRODUCTION.

of the body frequently ensues, and unconquerable fevers prevail, which generally terminate in convulsions and death.

“ To prevent all these unhappy consequences, let us but for a moment reflect that every mother is designed by Nature to foster her own child. If the breast is not to be obtained, cows milk is in general to be preferred to any kind of food that can be invented, because it is nearly similar to that which Nature intended.”

I sincerely wish the hints thrown out in the following letters may be attended to, as the success of rearing children, and the preserving infirm and aged constitutions, greatly depends upon good nursing; much more indeed than it does upon the application of medicines. For although, by the medical art, many violent and dangerous diseases may oftentimes be prevented from proving fatal; yet, even when the doctor has taken his leave, the good nurse must still be watchful “ to restore again the in-

INTRODUCTION. xi

“ valid to a healthy and vigorous constitution.”

I was apprehensive that many objections would be started both against my opinions and maxims ; which indeed was a leading motive for concealing my name in the first edition ; but as I hope I have spoken with candour, and as I mean to persuade rather than to find fault, it is to be wished that the younger part of the female sex at least, whom it more nearly concerns, will not receive this little present with such unconquerable prejudices as would probably have been experienced from their grand-dames. If, by addressing their understanding, I should be happy enough to convince their judgment of the propriety of the following observations, I trust they may prove in some measure beneficial both to themselves and their future daughters, in the exalted characters of wives and mothers.

There is a certain respect due to our ancestors and their customs ; and for my own part I would never embrace new maxims or

xii INTRODUCTION.

opinions, but upon full conviction of their claiming preference to old ones. Still it should be remembered, the mind was never designed for a state of slavery; therefore, when once our reason is truly convinced of former errors, let the sanction for such mistakes be never so redoubtable, there is a glorious freedom inherent in human nature that prompts a generous mind to revoke erroneous opinions, and adopt those systems, which, upon mature deliberation, shall appear more rational. And whenever the contrary disposition is discovered, it altogether shews a want of candour, and points out an obstinacy, not only culpable with respect to our private characters, but deserving of censure as it regards society; for such a temper tends to prohibit every kind of discovery that may either improve our own knowledge, or benefit our fellow-creatures,

All our knowledge with respect to infants must be obtained from observation alone, as no one ever pretended to remember those

INTRODUCTION. xiii

sensations and wants which he himself experienced in the earliest part of childhood ; therefore a careful attendance is required in the nursery. When infants are properly managed, there is but seldom an occasion for the help of medicine : and should it be necessary to call in assistance of this kind, as they are totally incapable of relating their distress, it requires an accurate observation, together with a circumstantial account from the nurses who attend upon them, to enable a medical practitioner to form a right judgment of their diseases.



C O N T E N T S.

L E T T E R I.

Of Marks—the imaginary consequences of frights and longings.—A candid enquiry into the merits of this doctrine.

L E T T E R II.

Of Marks—shewing that such blemishes may happen independent of the mother's imagination.

L E T T E R III.

Of Miscarriages.

L E T T E R IV.

Mother's Milk—the natural and best food for infants.

L E T T E R V.

Arguments in favour of suckling—as well for the mother's sake, as the child's—and the evils to be apprehended in delivering children to the care of foster-nurses.

L E T T E R VI.

*The management of infants from the birth—
with directions for putting them to the breast.*

L E T T E R VII.

*A natural and easy method of suckling children
—This duty proved to be a pleasure rather
than a fatigue.*

L E T T E R VIII.

The proper method of weaning children.

L E T T E R IX.

*The safest method of bringing children up by
hand.*

L E T T E R X.

*A general management of children, from the
time of weaning, till they are about two
years old—with observations upon the cutting
of teeth.*

L E T T E R XI.

*A general management of children, from two
years old till they leave the nursery.*

L E T T E R XII.

The necessity of cultivating the dispositions of children, to render them amiable and virtuous.

L E T T E R XIII.

Of milk—Its properties examined—the different kinds of milk compared with each other—and their particular virtues explained.

L E T T E R XIV.

The sick chamber—with directions also for invalids.

L E T T E R XV.

Old age—by virtue rendered truly honourable. The steps by which we mounted into life, shewn to be the easiest and best paths to descend into the grave.

E R R A T A.

P. 48, l. 4, read *offspring*.

88, l. 15, dele *upon*.

90, l. 17, for *those* read *they*.

160, l. 11, read *children*.

L E T T E R I.

OF MARKS.

LETTER I.

*Of Marks—the imaginary consequences of
frights and longings. A candid enquiry into
the merits of this doctrine.*

PREJUDICES which have been imbibed in our early days, received from those we esteem and reverence, and supported by the authority of past ages, must needs make impressions upon the most candid and ingenuous minds ; particularly when almost every day produces strange and wonderful stories to corroborate the supposed fact.

The various blemishes frequently discovered upon children at the birth, have been generally considered as the effect of a fright,

or a disappointment of the mothers longings ; and indeed this opinion has so far prevailed, that it has been, for a long time past, looked upon as incontestable. Should any one therefore presumptuously dare to deny this amazing peculiarity in pregnant women, and the consequent effect upon the embryo, he must expect nothing less than the general censures of the female world. Besides, the many positive assertions upon this head, from the most sensible persons of undoubted veracity, will naturally lead a prudent man to speak with caution against the doctrine. Nevertheless it surely cannot be improper to make a candid enquiry into so wonderful a phænomenon.

It is a subject by far the most interesting to the ladies : it comes indeed particularly under their cognizance ; for the dreaded evil affects the fair sex much more essentially than it does ours. With my female friends therefore I beg leave to discuss this important point.

It is by every one allowed to the honour of this nation, and let particular commendation be given to the daughters of Great-Britain themselves, that in the education of young women, letters, and the polite improvements, are much more attended to in this age than formerly ; accomplishments which not only render their manners more engaging, but qualify them likewise for the happy domestic life ; and contribute much to adorn these amiable and sweetly-endearing companions of the social hour. How essentially necessary is such a friend to make life comfortable and happy !

What a lustre does every good and accomplished woman add to the matrimonial state !—She must by every reasonable man be considered not only as the partner of his bed, but of his very soul.

I can at this time readily call to mind many such exalted characters, to whom in a most particular manner I now address

myself:—women, whose enlarged minds are capable of a much greater depth of reasoning than these speculations will afford ; and in whose company I have oftentimes enjoyed the happiness of friendly conversation—with whom, upon different occasions, I have, in part, entered into the subject of this, and the following letters. It is indeed at the request of several of these my worthy female friends that I have been induced to collect my thoughts, in order to deliver them to the public.

Ignorance, my fair readers, is the parent of credulity and superstition. Knowledge is the conqueror that triumphs over such terrible foes. How much is the understanding enlightened and improved by the use of letters ? When therefore we consider that the art of printing was not discovered until the fifteenth century, and it was a long time after that before it became universal in Europe, we shall not greatly wonder at the bigotry and rudeness of manners

in our ancestors ; and we shall cease to reflect upon those credulous times.

To the score of ignorance we are to place the many and hideous stories which have been formerly related of apparitions, goblins, and witches, that have at times infested different parts of Europe ; and even in England have claimed the attention of civil and ecclesiastical power : instances of which are to be found in our history.

At this period I believe there are but few who give credit to such romances. The Spectator and his cotemporaries pretty well cleared the country of witches. As to ghosts, the last that made its appearance was the notorious Fanny of Cock-lane, and this arch spirit was effectually laid, as it is called, in a court of justice ; where the gentlemen of the law carefully collected her ashes, and, like alchemists, turned them into gold, so that there is no fear of any more spirits rising from her urn.

We are now, my intelligent fair, fully convinced of the ridiculous fallacy of such bugbears, and at this time there is scarcely a female but can enjoy, without one dreadful apprehension, a cool and silent walk by moon-light. A pleasure their mothers could hardly be persuaded to partake of; for not longer than half a century ago, if a dauntless virgin had thus presumptuously ventured, the affrighted parents would have been apprehensive for their daughter, lest she should, some time or another, be punished for such impious audacity.

Thus we see prodigies and wonders daily vanishing, in proportion as literary knowledge, and the general improvement of the understanding, are cultivated.

To some future season perhaps we must postpone the elucidation of marks, the supposed consequences of frights and longings: Yet, if this matter should be a subject of dispute with the ladies for the present, I doubt not that a little time and candid ob-

servation will commit the very idea of such romantic opinions, together with that of frights, and every other superstitious error, to eternal oblivion.

A fright is generally believed to have the same unlucky effect upon pregnant women, as a disappointment of their wishes will produce. Hence they are perpetually racked between hope and fear, to the torment of themselves, and every body about them; and are sometimes so extravagant with regard to a wish or longing, as not to be satisfied but at an immense expence: for we have heard that these strange cravings are not altogether confined to the palate, they sometimes extend themselves to equipage, jewels, dress, baubles, &c. As a proof that such chimerical notions even at this time prevail, the reader is desired to attend to the following relation.—

Since the first edition of this work went to the press, the author happened to dine, in company with a pregnant lady totally

free from such prejudice, at the house of an intimate female friend, who has an heart truly good and sympathetic. Her teeming visiter took notice of a toy; it was a pigeon-house made of Staffordshire ware, and in a baby-house would appear a proper ornament: Yet the forebodings of this good matron, lest her friend should have entertained a longing for it, operated so strongly, that she kindly ordered it to be put into her visiter's carriage. The pregnant lady strongly objected to it indeed, but to no purpose; insomuch that she was obliged to take the pigeon-house home.

But not to dwell upon such like particulars, which nevertheless have been frequently introduced in support of whimsical desires, and which are continually magnified in the relation, we shall confine our remarks to the general manner in which this magic operates.

As I have universally been thought an infidel in matters of this kind, the ladies

have treated me accordingly ; nay frequently, when I have begged quarter, it has been cruelly denied ; which cautions me at this time to be modestly humble and diffident. I shall assert nothing, but by fair and impartial enquiry endeavour to search out the truth.

In consequence of my supposed want of faith in these affairs, there is scarcely a female I am acquainted with, who does not treasure up every surprising story of this kind that she hears ; to tell it me with all the advantages that a persuasive tongue can give, in order to bring about my conversion.

I verily believe that by the assistance of these my good friends I could furnish a large folio volume of such histories. It is a spacious field for the fancy to rove in. A variety of preternatural marks in living persons may be produced every day : nor can the existence of these extraordinary appearances be denied, for that is incontestable, as every one can vouch. The true cause of

such wonders therefore is the subject of our pursuit.

In the first place, I shall make bold to declare that I never met with one of these blemishes, which altogether struck my fancy with respect even to the imaginary likeness; or which, as to the supposed cause, engaged my rational confidence.

I have been shewed a mark that was compared to the rhind of bacon, and told a strange story of the mother's longing for a gammon—I fancied it to be like the tinge of a Malatto, and congratulated the parents that the child was not altogether swarthy.

A lady of my acquaintance has oftentimes declared that she is marked with a perfect pig, but I never could obtain the sight of this rarity, it not being conveniently situated for public inspection. A little while ago I was in company with her mo-

ther, an elderly woman, and quite a stout champion, as I found, for marks and blemishes, in consequence of frights and longings. Upon a particular enquiry it appeared that she was unacquainted with the accident until some considerable time after the birth ; and then from the appearance of the mark she very well remembered the occasion of it—which was this. When she was very near her time, her husband and self were invited to the house of a relation living at some distance, who, she knew, had some very fine sucking pigs. They both thought the ride would be too much for her ; but she recollects her having said that she would go at all events, if she was sure they would dress one of the pigs for dinner. However, the husband went alone, and returned in the evening with a quarter of a pig that had been dressed on purpose for their dinner, her relation knowing she was fond of it. But alas ! as her evil genius would have it, when she sat down to supper she could eat but very little ; and at that time unluckily

rubbed the part with her hand where her daughter is marked, which she is very certain occasioned the form of a pig. I asked her how the child could be marked, since she had her desire. No matter for that, answered she, though I had the pig, the child to be sure must be marked; because I longed for it nice and hot, with good plumb sauce and gravy, but was obliged to eat it cold. We all laughed heartily at the conclusion, though, as the reader may judge, from different motives; but the old lady thought she had obtained a complete victory.

I have given this little history to shew the absurd manner in which these things are usually accounted for. It will be also proper in this place to remark the notorious dissimilarity between such blemishes and their supposed originals. We are to take notice likewise of the ease with which the fancy is imposed upon, or imposes on itself in such cases, even to infatuation; magnifying the most trifling conjectures into the strongest confirmations. How often do wo-

men rack their minds to find out the origin of these marks? which evidently proceeds from their aversion to be thought capable of producing an offspring with any imperfections, and their servants and nurses, considering it actually as their business, are always ready to help them out upon these occasions.

Fruit, wine, boiled lobsters, fresh salmon, and such like things of a red colour are the most common marks, and there is scarcely a family in the kingdom but some one or more of them can produce instances of this sort.

These strange effects we are told not only happen to the human race, but also, how wonderful to relate!—to brutes. There is a worthy family, whose veracity is not to be doubted, that are firmly persuaded of the following fact; of which they were all spectators. I shall deliver the account, as

nearly as possible, in the lady's words, who favoured me with the relation.

Her father's favourite cat happened to produce a kitten, which, to the surprise of all the family, was marked upon the back, with a rat. As the kitten grew, the rat encreased likewise ; till, at the end of some months, it dropped off the kitten quite perfect in its form ;—and the lady had it in her own hand. I was questioned very particularly whether I could any longer doubt the consequences of longing and frights, since it even extended to brutes—for, continued she, what could be the cause of this, but the creature being disappointed of some rat she was pursuing ?

Thus closely pressed I begged her yet to pardon my want of belief—As to the cause, I was silent about it ; that there was a substance upon the kitten, which fell off as related, I had no doubt—what then could I doubt ?—That their own imaginations deceived them — How was that possible ? Much

more so than they were aware of—where is the rat, madam?—Thrown away long ago—that is unlucky, for had I seen it, probably it might have struck me as resembling an owl, or some other thing altogether as extravagant. It was downright obstinacy in me, for I would not believe any thing—I further said, had it been a rat, I thought she would have wanted courage to touch it—even supposing it to be dead; and had it been alive, it would certainly have run away and prevented her. This pleasantry abated somewhat of the earnestness of our argument, and a laugh made us very good friends—but I was an incredulous man.

I have heard of a woman surprised in the street, when she was very near her time, by a person with a withered arm; upon her return home the fright threw her into labor, and she was delivered of a child with a withered arm.—How can we possibly believe such an immediate effect as this to be produced?—Is it to be credited that the mo-

ther's terror should instantly blast the arm of the child, thus rendering it similar to the object of horror?

And if this be rejected, how can we allow the total loss of a limb from a similar cause?—Could it be annihilated? This no one will assert. If not, supposing the effect to take place, and the arm or the leg should be separated from the body, what becomes of it? Such divided part is never to be found upon these occasions. On the contrary, where there is an addition to the form, proceeding also, as we are told, from fright; such, for instance, as a toe or finger extraordinary, an arm or a leg; in the name of wonder, from what source can those exuberances be so immediately produced? Is it not astonishing that such credulous infatuations should thus beguile our reason?

Not to trouble my fair readers with any more of these relations, which by prejudiced persons are accounted undeniable, I

shall just mention a few facts for the consideration of the candid.

A lady of my particular acquaintance, during the time of her pregnancy, was unfortunately overturned in a coach, by which accident, as she endeavoured to get out, the first joint of her second finger was intirely broken off. This was an alarming circumstance to all her friends, and the dreadful apprehensions of the child's being born a cripple disturbed every one; but to the great astonishment of her acquaintance, she was delivered of a fine and perfect boy.

An eminent practitioner relates a story to this effect, which is equally to be credited, as happening under his own observation.

A lady of quality being in convulsions, the family sent for the doctor in great haste. He found her upon the bed extremely ill indeed. When her ladyship came a little to herself, she cried out, The black cat! the

black cat!—her well-known particular aversion to this domestic animal seemed to point out the cause of the disaster, of which till now they were entirely ignorant, and the servants diligently searched for the object; when in a tub, placed to receive the rain water, near her ladyship's dressing-room window, poor puss was discovered.

This sight so terribly affected the lady, that her fears were ever uppermost, and she was miserable until the time of her delivery. Neither could her friends pacify her, nor the arguments of so able a man bring her to reason. Notwithstanding all they could say, she was fully persuaded her child's face would be like this black cat's. At length Lucina smiled propitious on its birth, and her ladyship's apprehensions vanished upon her being brought to bed of a lovely boy without either mark or blemish.

Just about the same time it happened that the same gentleman delivered another person of a boy also. The child had a small

darkish spot upon the forehead. He was curious enough to interrogate the mother about it, and she most ingenuously declared that she was neither sensible of any fright or longing during the whole time of her breeding.

Had this blemish happened to the child of the noble parent, the doctor truly observes, the black cat would undoubtedly have occasioned a remarkable anecdote in the history of her ladyship's house—for by all her family and friends it would have been looked upon as an incontestable proof of these prodigies. And give me leave to add, with much more seeming plausibility too than the generality of these stories can boast; because the lady had declared her apprehensions at the time of the supposed injury.

I shall here add another instance of an apprehension altogether as fruitless as that of the noble lady. It was made known to me in consequence of reading the above to

a particular friend, who immediately replied that he was under great anxiety for his wife, upon account of her being terrified at the sight of a person who had a very unhappy blemish on her face. The wife of this gentleman, by chance going to St. Paul's church, was placed in a stall exactly opposite to the unfortunate object, which affected her so much that her devotion was entirely lost; and she talked of this poor woman continually after she left the church.

In a few weeks this lady went again to St. Paul's, and was unluckily placed opposite the same person, which so distressed her that she dared not to venture there any more. Surely this is as striking an instance as we can suppose. I told my friend I was glad he acquainted me of it before his wife was brought to bed, and that I should pay great attention to the consequence. But at the same time desired he would endeavour to make both himself and wife very easy, assuring him, on the observation of myself and

others, how little room there was to be under any dismal apprehension on this account. To finish the story, his wife was soon after delivered of a fine and perfect child. Since which this lady has declared her apprehensions so terrified her, she dared not to look at the child, till she collected from the conversation of her attendants that the boy's face was free from blemish. What a cruel suspense and painful sufferance must this have been to a mother!

Not long ago I was in the chamber of a lady newly delivered; her mother being present took me to the window, and in great distress acquainted me the child had a large mark upon the right side of its face, that she was terrified at the thoughts of breaking it to her daughter, and begged me to acquaint her of it. Accordingly, after congratulating the good lady in the straw, upon her own health and a fine baby, in the course of conversation, I jocosely told her that we were at a loss to account for a pretty spot upon the child's face, and must desire her

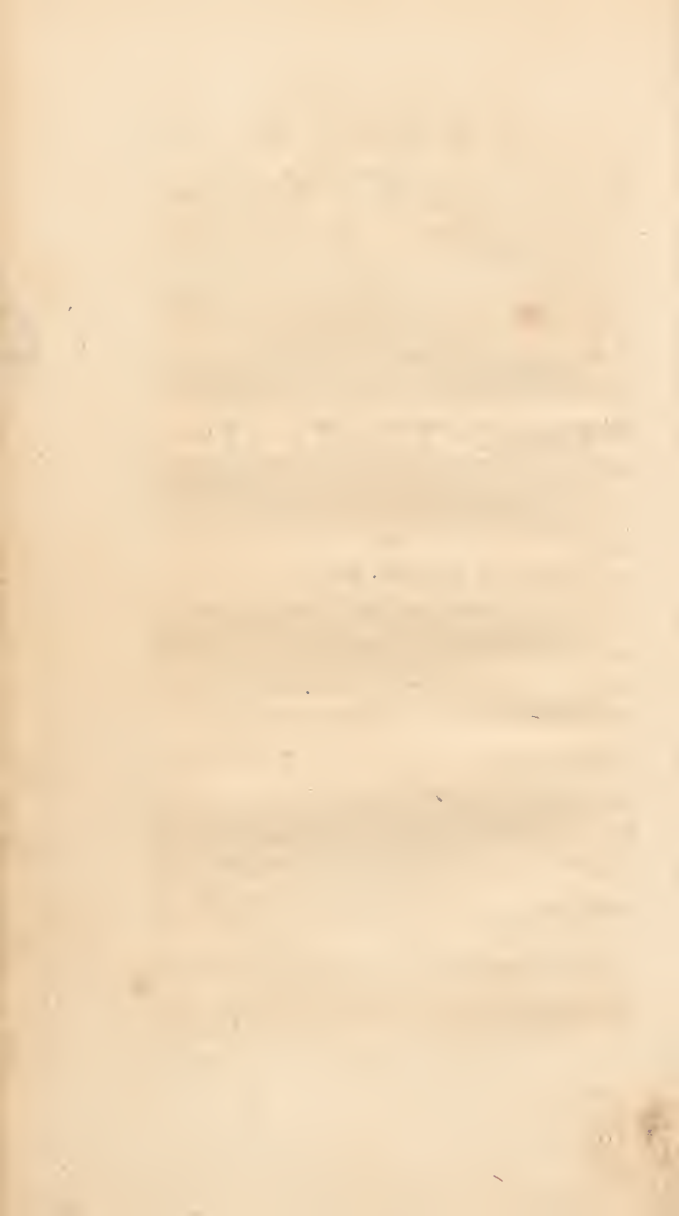
to inform us of the occasion of it. After a very minute recollection, she frankly confessed she did not remember any one thing that she longed for during her pregnancy, neither could she any how account for the accident.

A variety of other circumstances might be enumerated to discredit, though many stories are related to confirm this wonderful affair. I shall not, however, introduce further particulars, though divers have happened within my notice, but conclude this letter with remarking, that in every instance before related, where the misfortune of a blemish was apprehended, it did not happen; and in the other cases, where marks appeared, they were entirely unexpected, and the cause of them totally unknown to the mothers; which, I may venture to say, has always been the case. If, therefore, women would wish to be credited in these stories of frights and longings, let them declare, before they are delivered, like the two ladies mentioned in this letter, that

they have marked the child, and make known the cause of it. Nothing less can prove this fact, and till then even the possibility of it may very reasonably be doubted—for surely we may conclude that so remarkable an effect of sympathy can never take place without the immediate and most certain knowledge of the mother.

L E T T E R I I .

O F M A R K S .



LETTER II.

Of Marks—shewing that such blemishes may happen independent of the mother's imagination.

AS to longings, I doubt not but every person must have been sensible of such inclinations. I can answer for myself, that when indisposed, and my stomach rather weak, I have many times suffered, not a little, in being disappointed of a thing that seemed particularly to strike my fancy; surely I may be allowed to say that the prejudices of female education are likely to encourage such inclinations to a much greater degree in pregnant women, whose appetites are usually weak and fanciful; and, as it is the case in every passion when too extravagantly indulged, I take it for granted ladies may be sometimes very much hurt by such a disappointment, independently of superstitious, tormenting apprehensions.

I would wish to arm every female breast with the resolution necessary for her own

happiness. Yet I do not deny but upon a thousand occasions the ladies suffer, unavoidably as it were, from fear; and materially so in the present instance.

Women, from the delicacy of their frame, and the particular mode of education in polite countries, are without doubt much more under the dominion of fear than men; who are continually spurred on by custom and vigour to exert their courage. This renders a variety of objects, although terrible to the fair sex, so familiar to ours, that contempt alone is oftentimes a security against many such horrible intruders.

We confess then that women are exceedingly subject to fear. It is also granted that, in things they long for, they may be painfully disappointed. It is not denied but that there are oftentimes very extraordinary appearances at the birth, which the fancy likens to a variety of things—but it does not therefore follow that we are bound to believe such marks or blemishes to be the

effect of fright, or the consequence of a parent's disappointment.

In the first letter we gave several relations on both sides of the question : I shall now beg leave to propose a few queries, which if allowed, in my opinion, seem, in part, to account for these extraordinary appearances ; and what cannot be illustrated upon a rational enquiry, why may we not suppose to proceed from hidden, accidental causes in the operations of nature ? Since excrescences upon trees, plants, and indeed blemishes on almost every kind of animals, (of which daily experience will convince a common observer) seem strongly to authorise such a conjecture ; I say, why may we not suppose this to be the true reason, without the assistance of a wonder-working imagination ?

Will not an inflammation upon the eye frequently produce an universal redness over that part which otherwise appears beautifully white ?

What is the cause of this surprising alteration ?

Must not there ever have been a fluid circulating in those tender vessels ?—And must not that fluid be necessarily limpid ?

Are not those vessels therefore, unless injured, too small to admit the sanguinary fluid in its compact and red state ?

And does it not evidently appear that they must be considerably distended, before the red blood can be admitted, which denotes this inflammation ?

Save where the virgin blush brings the blood into the cheek, or the rosy-coloured nymph rivals our courtly beauties ;—does not the whiteness of the skin in almost every part of the body plainly shew that its vessels equally deny the admission of this red fluid ?

We are told by curious enquirers, that for several months after conception, the

embryo receives its support from a limpid fluid, and that the form itself is nearly limpid, or colourless.

If so, are not the vessels of an unborn child, as it arrives nearer to the birth, gradually enlarged, so as in the proper parts to give admission to this red sanguinary fluid?

May not therefore some accidental pressure upon a pregnant woman—the violence of a sudden jolt—or the shock received by a false step or a fall, with a variety of other casualties, convey such an injury to the tender embryo, as upon some part of the skin to occasion a similar effect to that of the eye?

Do we not oftentimes observe inflammations in the eye to be in a manner habitual?

Why may we not then suppose these delicate vessels, when thus distended, to be so oppressed by the particles of the fluid which

rush into them, as never more to be able to recover their natural size ?

Hence these parts, and these parts only, giving admission to the red blood—is it not probable that they may assume the various forms, which in various infants are imagined to resemble so many different things ?

The cure of the before-mentioned inflammation of the eye frequently depends, not upon bleeding, but upon constringing the vessels, and restoring them to their original state, so that they again only admit their proper limpid fluids; and perhaps, if astringent applications were used at the birth, where a strong pressure could be made upon the particular part, many of these blemishes might in a great measure, if not altogether, be removed.

Such are our conjectures on the cause of those marks which are totally of, or approaching to a red colour. But there are other blemishes which, at first sight, my

readers may take for granted cannot be accounted for by this way of reasoning : such, for instance, as appear of a light and dark brown, of a chocolate and black colour. Nevertheless, my fair friends, permit us candidly to proceed.

A blow sometimes stains the skin yellow; if the part be much bruised, the tinge is deeper, and frequently turns quite black. A curious observer must have noticed in those persons, who from violent blows have received such contusions as are vulgarly called black eyes, that the skin, before it returns to its natural colour, assumes a great variety of different hues; all proceeding from the same first cause. Is it not then probable that some such accident happening to an unborn child may produce a similar effect? This perhaps will be allowed: but then why should such blemishes continue in children, since they usually disappear in the case before-mentioned? However, to proceed in the enquiry: Such effects being admitted, their permanency

then is the difficulty to be overcome. Let us consider that, although in mature life the constitution has generally strength sufficient to repel most accidents, not instantly mortal; yet in childhood, and old age, the powers of the body are overcome by very slight injuries. In the meridian of life those parts of the body which are disfigured by accidents most commonly recover themselves; nevertheless many instances are to be produced, even in adults, where the skin continues discoloured. Bruises and other injuries upon the shins, particularly in feeble constitutions, frequently occasion marks that never disappear. The same is likewise observed upon the legs of those who are accustomed to sit too near a fire, in which case we say they have burnt their shins; and old sores generally leave such marks. I have seen many of these lasting blemishes. My readers probably recollect the fact, and also that such injured parts assume a variety of colours; black, red, brown, motley, &c. much resembling

those which are supposed to proceed from the force of imagination.

Since therefore we find such like appearances are sometimes permanent in the different periods of life, what can be said to disprove their continuance in infants, when supposed to happen either before or at the time of delivery ? for surely we may conclude, the more delicate the form is, it will prove the more susceptible of injuries, and those injuries will last the longer ; the tender vessels in such cases not being so able to recover themselves. And as we often find it to be so in the feebleness of age, and in a variety of other instances,—why may we not in the tender embryo also suppose these blemishes sometimes to remain, and be durable ?

But if you think the above reasoning not sufficiently plausible, let us consider the difference of complexion in different persons of this country—but principally the dif-

ferent colours of Europeans and Africans—and since we find appearances so diametrically opposite in the skins of different persons—why may not the same contrast in some measure take place in the skin of one and the same person through a kind of error in nature from her intended scope?

Nay, do not those blemishes called freckles, and more especially moles, which frequently make their first appearance in advanced life, and are often covered with hairs; I say, do not these, with the common excrescences of warts, &c. shew us how easily most of the different colours and appearances may be produced at any age? And though the cause of these is full as little known as the matter under present consideration, was the effect ever deemed miraculous?

Now is it to be wondered at, if these sportings of nature should bear a resemblance to some or other of the vast variety of objects in the animal or vegetable creation?

Or in fact, if they bear no such real resemblance, cannot the imagination readily suppose they do ; in like manner as, when looking upon the clouds, we easily discern men, horses, trees, forests, flocks of sheep, armies, and indeed every thing which the most fruitful invention can form ?

Some further rational conjectures might be added, but they would probably in this place be considered as too technical for the generality of my readers : I shall therefore wave them at present, for I think there has been already enough said upon this subject to check at least, if not entirely to subdue, these reigning infatuations.

Now if the doctrine of marks, in consequence of frights and longings, should prove to be nothing more than prejudice, ladies will avoid the continual distress which in these circumstances they labour under—for sorry I am to say it, but at present it seems as fashionable to cultivate such dispositions

in young married women, as to recommend matrimony itself.

On the other hand, supposing all that has been advanced should prove to be chimerical; the removing of the apprehension, by which I mean the foreboding fears of the mother, will be to remove the greatest part of the evil—and surely it is time enough at the birth to discern an imperfection. This indeed is a point which the strongest advocates for the force of imagination must not only allow, but likewise approve of its tendency; since fortitude is the only preventative, according to their favourite system, against the miserable consequences of frights, and disappointed longings: for if such a degree of courage can be obtained as will prevent fear, and such a degree of resolution maintained as will prevent the mind being hurt, upon any casual disappointment of the inclination, the evil itself is at once remedied; because the imagination will never painfully dwell either upon objects of disgust, or inclination; and consequently

L E T T E R II. 41

blemishes can never happen from such causes.

I trust that my attentive and intelligent readers will not be displeased with the discussion of this very interesting subject.

L E T T E R I I I .

O F M I S C A R R I A G E S .

LETTER III.

OF MISCARRIAGES.

WE are now, my delicate fair ones, entering upon a subject which requires some circumspection, to divide the province of the physician from the advice of a friend.

There are, undoubtedly, constitutional errors, which oftentimes prevent women from becoming joyful mothers; and they may be hindered also by accidental circumstances. Both these considerations, however, belong to the physician. In a word, therefore, these directions do not extend to such remote causes; my counsels at present being designed to assist you in your own sphere.

The desire of children is evidently predominant in almost every female disposition: it must be certainly owing to the wise ordination of Providence that their education is

so admirably calculated to encourage this fondness. How engaging are the childish amusements of a daughter !—Let us picture an innocent little girl fondly caressing a waxen image, dressing and undressing it with all the pomp and importance of a tender mother. What a delightful employment !—how amiable does the child herself appear !—and so endearing is this female province, that it is justly remarked to grow up with the sex into life.

I have with inexpressible pleasure seen many young ladies, women grown, happily amusing themselves at their younger sister's baby-house, and often discovered a crimson blush, that genuine mark of female modesty, arising from their being somewhat confused in suffering themselves to be thus unexpectedly surprised.

There are indeed some persons who have declared an aversion to children. I have painfully suffered from the enumera-

tion of the difficulties, and inconveniences, which they describe parents to labour under who have the care of a little family.—Selfish and unsocial considerations !

God has universally manifested that the whole human race are dependent upon one another, and those persons who think and act thus narrowly, can neither be accounted good characters in themselves, nor worthy members with respect to society. But alas ! they are strangers to the feelings of parental fondness.

Certain I am, ye amiable wives, that if it be your good fortune to become happy mothers—your children, those dear pledges of love, if prudently educated, prove not only an engaging comfort to yourselves, but a great and lasting security for the affections of your husbands. Trust me there is a time when the charms of beauty must cease, and the passions of youth bend to the majesty of wisdom—'tis then good-nature and

good-sense, with that essential ingredient a chearful disposition, will in a great measure secure your conquest; and charming offsprings will assuredly contribute to unite parents in the lasting bonds of friendship.

How desirable therefore are children! Even poverty itself does not prevent the sanguine wish for them. Let us then endeavour to promote their safe and happy increase.

The difference of constitution in women is an important affair; there are some who upon every trifling occasion are subject to miscarriages—others again, who in spite of the most indirect and powerful means are often compelled to bear the token of unwarrantable amours—and there are instances even of married women, who, not supposing themselves to be breeding, have been treated in the most likely manner to bring about an abortion—but all in vain. A remarkable story of this kind occurs to

my memory, which I relate from my own knowledge.

An honest labouring man and his wife lived together many years without having children, and they were both beyond the meridian of life, when the poor woman was supposed to be afflicted with a dropsy. From time to time she advised with several eminent physicians, who, from her appearance and the account she gave, treated her as dropfical ; administering the most powerful remedies against that disorder.

At length she grew so very big that all hopes of a cure were given over, and the operation of tapping was recommended. The husband's circumstances being narrow, and the expence of this illness putting it out of his power to employ a surgeon, the poor woman was advised to go into the hospital ; this, however, she refused.

A week or two after this, the husband called, with a most joyful countenance, to

inform me his wife was brought to bed, and that both the mother and child were likely to do well. I was at that time very young, but my reflections upon the oddity of the event determined me to be always wary in the examination of dropfical female patients.

Thus we see in this woman, and in a variety of other cases, where impious efforts have been used to promote a miscarriage, that Nature, in spite of great violence, sometimes will not be interrupted.

Let us then aim at assisting her in this great work, where the constitution appears not able to go through with it ; and point out the most rational means to prevent abortion.

Our first letter, over and above the enquiry concerning marks, longings, and frights, greatly tends to this material end. Women of a delicate form, and too great sensibility, are the most liable to mis-

carry. Such also are the most likely to imbibe, and to be affected by, the prejudices we there wished to caution them against. The power of fear is undoubtedly sovereign over most persons, and this, as it frequently occasions miscarriages, is truly to be dreaded. If therefore the prejudices were discountenanced, the unhappy fear itself would assuredly cease.

And further, there is nothing tends more to render life happy, either to men or women, than to conquer, as much as possible, the passion of fear. This is the monster which in some degree subdues us all ; and too frequently makes mankind miserable. There is no calamity but would easily become supportable, could we divest ourselves of fear ; and daily experience proves women to be most subject to its tortures. How many trifling insects, that a man continually spurns from him, ruffle the breast of females, and throw them into the greatest agonies !

The evil therefore is seated in the imagination, for it is the dreadful apprehension of their own mind that torments them; which, by a firm and steady resolution, may generally be overcome. Fortitude is an inestimable jewel.

However difficult the task appears, the earliest and strongest prejudices may commonly be conquered. I am sensible that sometimes it will require great pains, and never can be done but by the strength of reason. Would you, my too susceptible fair, follow my advice on this subject, a thousand accidents might be avoided that hourly happen to you upon this, and many other occasions.

Reason was bestowed upon us both for the preservation of our health and the promotion of our happiness. The abuse of it as necessarily destroys the one as the other.

How do we continually reflect upon ourselves for inconveniencies, mental as well as

corporeal, that arise from inconsiderateness and folly? Believe me, ladies, miscarriages are frequently brought about by imprudence. When a wife has the pleasing prospect of becoming a mother, it is no longer a time to be revelling in midnight assemblies. Such a conduct not only deprives her of natural rest, but also endangers her health, and thereby oftentimes promotes this dreaded evil.

In this and every other point I beg leave to caution you against falling into wide extremes. Some ladies I have seen madly running up and down, and jumbling all the town over in the most jolting hackney-coach that could be procured; and, although at the same time they complain of being shaken to pieces, yet this they say is to prevent the accident.—Others never step out of doors, nay, nor so much as go up and down a pair of stairs, for several months: this also is to avoid the danger.

Again let me warn you of both extremes. Be this your guide — whatever exercise you are capable of taking without fatigue, indulge—but no more. Never, in this point, regard the example of others. Because your friend can do this and that, it is no reason you should; and if the attempt gives pain, it should certainly be avoided.

I need not caution the present age against the pernicious custom of lacing too tightly; for a lads of fifteen, in the dress of our times, would in the last age have been supposed to be just at down-lying.

I do not mean to condemn, but to praise the ladies for giving themselves room in the waist; nevertheless extremes you know are not advised. There is a certain medium in every part of life, which is the *je-ne-sçay-quoi* that constitutes the agreeable.

It is as uncommon now to see a young girl crooked, as it formerly was to see one

perfectly straight. I believe no one denies that their shapes were greatly injured by the stiffness of their stays, and by being laced so exceedingly close. This pernicious custom was frequently the cause of a bad state of health, and threw many young women into consumptions. We now rarely see ladies fainting in public places; but when they did not allow themselves room to breathe, it happened every day.* This prudent alteration therefore, so serviceable to maidens, is still more necessary for married women.

There is another caution at this time to be observed. I have frequently beheld, with pain, divers ladies too apt to be lifting and playing with heavy children: there are certain sympathetic emotions, altogether natural and laudable, which prompt them to it; and far be it from my thoughts to deprive them of so tender and generous a

* It is to be hoped the ladies will not again lace themselves up, to display fine shapes; the Author, however, wishes to warn them against so pernicious a fashion.

gratification: nevertheless, to see a delicate little form, very near her time, stop a bouncing boy, and catch him in her arms, is really an alarming sight: many miscarriages happen from such inconsiderateness; and, if our conjectures are not wrong, many blemishes also by these means are probably occasioned.

But there is a practice indiscriminately used even to this day, worse than all the rest; and that is bleeding. Whether a woman be robust or weakly, if she is pregnant, she must be bled. Has she any pains?—No matter. Is she in health?—Yes. But she must lose blood—Why? Because she is with child. Her mother always did it, and her grandmother, aye, and her great great grandmother too, time out of mind; and therefore can the propriety of it be doubted?—These are the general arguments used by women in favour of bleeding, when they are in perfect health; but if any slight indisposition happens, be it ever so foreign

to their particular situations, and which perhaps at another time would pass unnoticed, dreadful consequences are apprehended if they are not bled: nay, indeed, those little temporary inconveniencies, which generally and unavoidably attend advanced pregnancy, in their mistaken opinions, call aloud for bleeding.

In our two former letters we took notice of the difficulty that attends rooting out fixed and prevailing prejudices; and I am apprehensive that this is as deeply seated in the minds of women as those of which we there treated. However, let us ask the assistance of reason also in this particular, and search a little into the merits of the custom.

Is not the infant supported by the mother?

When there are two to be supported, is not more nourishment required than for one of them only?

Is this then a time, without a real necessity, to sport with the blood of a weakly and delicate woman? No, surely.

Let me therefore beg of you, my ingenuous friends, to consider this matter in a rational light. I have given a plain and easy clue to pursue the enquiry, and the subject will not permit me to enter more fully into it with my fair readers, without assuming the character of the physician, and without advancing those things which may, in this collection of letters, be considered as an affront to delicacy.

To your own thoughts then I commit it; and will conclude this letter with saying, that though I do not deny but there are cases which require bleeding—yet I caution you against doing it at random, and, indeed, without very good advice—at the same time I firmly believe such instances rarely happen to those who are not of a robust constitution, and am fully persuaded that many women are daily injured by this wrong practice.

LETTER IV.

OF MOTHERS MILK.



LETTER IV.

*Mothers milk — the natural and best food
for infants.*

I HAVE endeavoured to set forth the ridiculousness of women terrifying themselves, and every body about them, during their pregnancy with evils that, most probably, are altogether imaginary. I would wish my female readers to consider this subject in a more extensive view, and to aim at greater fortitude, than the sex can generally boast, in the common occurrences of life; when the tenderness of men is not so much engaged, and when the ladies cannot reasonably expect such kind allowances as are made at this particular time. Think me not severe; a faithful monitor must speak with freedom; the man who is blind to this foible, must be insensible to your charms, and unworthy of your confidence. Your happiness is at stake, much more so than a superficial observer may imagine. Female vivacity

softens the rugged paths of life, and, believe me, self-love operates powerfully even upon the most generous minds. The woman who indulges gloomy ideas ; who is continually brooding over melancholy ; who, in her hours of domestic retirement, is perpetually rendering herself miserable, and her most intimate acquaintance, and dearest relatives, unhappy—such a mistaken she must only expect the cold eye of pity. However powerful her personal attractions, she will ultimately banish her husband and her friends. It will be found her greatest misfortune, and at a time too when it is irretrievable, to have once had the merit to gain, *perhaps*, a valuable heart, when she has not discretion enough to keep it.—The importance of the subject will, I hope, apologize for this digression.

We have also earnestly laboured to conquer the prejudices concerning marks in consequence of frights and longings ; and have exposed the fabulous histories of those wonders. We have likewise shewn how

the understanding may be deceived by the forms of fancy, and have no less earnestly endeavoured to explode the mistaken custom of bleeding indiscriminately, during pregnancy – pointing out upon rational principles the absurdity of all. A task equally arduous in every part, a thousand prejudices being imbibed against the whole.

Another subject at this time presents itself to view. I mean that of women suckling their own children; against which the present obstinately received opinions are still more unaccountable than the former, as nothing but a strange perversion of human nature could first deprive children of their mothers milk. Give me leave therefore to observe, that milk is the natural support which the great Author of our being has provided for our infant state; and I am heartily sorry the present manner of bringing up children puts me, in some measure,

under the necessity of proving milk to be the best food that can be given them.

Milk is a nourishment produced from the various kinds of food taken in by the mother. Her stomach breaks and digests the aliment, which, after various operations of nature, becomes so far animalized as to be a kind of white blood; from whence animal bodies at all times receive their constant support and recruit. This therefore being admitted—until an infant's powers are sufficiently strengthened to perform so great a business as that of digestion, the mother, by the all-wise appointment of Providence, from her own breast supplies it with the means of life. Hence no other nourishment appears so proper for a newborn child.

For the further information and satisfaction of my female readers, and to convince them that milk is the most proper nourishment for tender infants, I think it will not be improper to give a concise ac-

count of the manner in which grown persons receive their constant recruit and support from their daily food.

Whether it be animal or vegetable diet, or a mixture of both, taken into the stomach; the quality of the food is so far altered by the digestive faculties, that a milky nutriment is produced from it; and as the aliment passes through the bowels, this milk is taken up by a great number of fine vessels, which, from their destined office, are called the milky vessels; and through them it is conveyed into the blood for our support: and, as before observed, Nature has so admirably contrived the animal fabric, that mothers are likewise enabled to support their young from this constant supply, which at the same time also affords to themselves their own proper nourishment.

This is the grand scheme of nutriment: for when these particles of our food which afford us sustenance, are thus taken up by

the milky vessels ; the grosser parts are, by the same wonderful construction of the bowels, rejected and evacuated, in a manner well known to every one.

Whoever therefore gives this argument a rational consideration will, I trust, be led to acknowledge milk to be not only the natural, but the best and most strengthening nourishment that infants can possibly receive ; because their digestive faculties are, at this time, incapable of producing a good and proper milky nutriment from any kind of food which can be given to them.

The Author of Nature has universally committed the support of infants, and the early part of children's education, to women ; if it were not thus ordained, he would undoubtedly have furnished men also with milk for the nourishment of their young ; and experience convinces us that women are much better qualified both by Nature and custom for this important concern.

This system of nursing therefore is peculiarly addressed to the fair sex, who are most interested in it, and who will most sensibly feel the happy or miserable effects of the manner in which they discharge this first great trust which is reposed in them. Here indeed a mother will assuredly reap the happy fruits of fortitude, and those likewise of a lively, chearful, and obliging disposition. This subject will be treated at large in the twelfth letter; nevertheless, give me leave to observe in this place, that such as the mother is, generally speaking, such will be the first, and most probably the most durable impressions received by the child. It therefore naturally follows, that infants, whose minds are early accustomed to agreeable objects, and whose expanding ideas are gratified with pleasing sensations, unabated by slavish fears; such, and such only, as they rise into life, will possess that generous gratitude, which prompts them to consider it as a first great duty to contribute to the happiness of their parents.

I am exceedingly offended, whenever I observe a child, grown to man or woman's estate, who shews, upon any occasion, a want of respect or duty to its parents; and more particularly so, if such flight or contempt be exercised towards a good mother. Unnatural monster! to be wanting in respect to her who bore him in her womb; who cherished and supported him with her milk; and for many years after his birth gave up her own pleasures and recreations intirely for his sake; and who had no cares but for his welfare. I would have a mark set upon the forehead of such a barbarous savage, and he should be hunted from the society of men.

Those mothers who by a foolish indulgence spoil their children's tempers and dispositions, are undoubtedly culpable; but the example of a violent, passionate, yet negligent and insensible father, is equally or more to be dreaded. A mother has this plea, that she endeavours at least at the time to make her child happy; and it may

be said in excuse for her conduct, that she is to be pitied in not knowing better : but there is no excuse either to God or man that can be urged to mitigate the vice and folly of such a father ; the iniquity resteth with himself alone, for the benevolent Author of our being is not to be arraigned upon this or any other occasion.

How provident is Nature in all her works ! How wonderfully indulgent to man, and other helpless animals in their first state of existence, by thus enabling the mother to feed her young with nourishment drawn from her own body, until such time as the offspring has obtained strength sufficient to provide for itself ! This gracious bounty is abused only by man, the most intelligent of earthly beings ; whose misuse of reason leads him astray, whilst humble instinct directs all other parts of the creation aright.

If we look around us, we shall find every animal that gives suck carefully fostering her young ; and other enjoyments are no

more thought of, until they are capable of providing for themselves. An example by which mankind might profit much; but the strong impulse of passion in this, and many other instances, subdues our reason. Did we consider the benefit of our children more, and the indulgence of our selfish inclinations less, the race of man would be more healthy, strong and vigorous, than we can at present boast. But alas! such is the depravity of human nature, that it would be in vain to enlarge upon this topic of complaint; it is therefore our present business to prevent, as much as possible, the future growth of these evils.

Let us, my friends, as you are all interested in the enquiry, compare the success of mankind with that of other animals in rearing their young. A little observation will convince us that greater numbers of the human race are lost in their infancy than of any other species; for near one half the deaths, within our bills of mortality, happen to children under five

years of age. And further, compare the opulent with the rustic, the success is still exceedingly different. How many children of the great fall victims to prevailing customs, the effects of riches? How many of the poor are saved by wanting these luxuries?

Again, compare the success of such as suckle their own offspring with that of those who commit them to the care of nurses, or bring them up by hand; and we shall there likewise find an amazing difference: but more of this hereafter.

From these considerations, it is evident that Nature is always preferable to art, whence the brute creation succeed better than the human in preserving their own species. And the peasant, whom necessity compels to follow Nature, is, in this respect, happier than his lord. Those mothers also, who, in spite of custom, pride, or indolence, will take their little babies to their breast, must have more comfort and success, than

those who cruelly consign them to the care of foster nurses ; thereby denying them that food, which is not only the most proper, but is ordained likewise for their infant state.

Let me then intreat those who are desirous of rearing their children, not to rob them of their natural breast ; would they wish them to be healthy and beautiful, let such mothers give suck : for even wet-nurses, we shall find, are very little to be depended upon.

LETTER V.

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF
SUCKLING.

L E T T E R V.

Arguments in favour of suckling—as well for the mother's sake, as the child's—and the evils to be apprehended in delivering children to the care of foster nurses.

HEALTH and beauty are desirable, and the latter in particular, to women. They must in this case be united, as it is impossible for a woman to be truly beautiful who wants health. Disease blights the rosy bloom upon the cheek, turns the delicate whiteness of the skin into a fallow hue, and destroys the enchanting lustre of the eye. How insufficient is it for a lovely maid to make a conquest, if she cannot keep it as a wife!

It is not at present my province to enlarge upon the accomplishments of the mind. How necessary they are to secure the affections of a husband, every prudent woman knows. And she must be equally sensible that the elegance of her person is

also to be regarded ; an advantage which those who are in a bad state of health have scarcely spirits to attend to : besides, illness too often renders the sweetest dispositions cross and peevish.

Those who are happy enough to have children, run the greatest risque, not only of losing them, but of destroying their own health and beauty, by repelling their milk immediately after delivery. It never can be done without producing a fever. Oftentimes tumours, and cancers in the breast, owe their origin to this pernicious custom ; asthmatical complaints, and lingering diseases are frequently occasioned by it ; and too commonly, the immediate death of the mother follows from such ill management.

Consider, my fair pupils, for your own health's sake, and for the sake of your future happiness, how necessary it is to preserve such dear pledges of mutual love. By these

powerful ties, many a man, in spite of impetuous passions, is compelled to continue the prudent, kind, indulgent, tender husband. Did you but thoroughly know the secret impulses of the human heart, you would not risk the loss of your children, by unnaturally denying them the means of life.

Let not the mistaken husband insinuate that you will be less charming in his sight, by doing your duty to your little ones ; many—many instances have I known of weakly and delicate women, who, at my particular request, have suckled their children, and thereby obtained a much better state of health ; nay, they have been more pleasing in their persons, after thus becoming happy mothers, and their husbands have, with pleasure, acknowledged their improved charms.

There may be some cases in which it is not prudent for a mother to give suck, but

these instances very rarely happen ; and there may be some women, who, although they are ever so desirous, cannot suckle ; this however is but seldom to be urged. I sincerely sympathise with those unfortunate ladies who are thus deprived of a happiness, only known to those who enjoy it. What shall we say under these necessitous circumstances ? Shall we advise such mothers to employ a wet-nurse ; or to bring their children up under their own management, according to proper rules which shall be laid down in a following letter ? They are both, in my opinion, wretched necessities. Yet, was an infant of my own thus unhappily situated, without hesitation I would prefer the latter ; for much is to be apprehended from a child's sucking a strange woman : nothing less than absolute necessity would make me comply with it.

Too often diseases, and those of the worst kind, are imbibed from the breast. It is a

shocking truth, but vicious inconstancy is become so universal, even amongst the lower rank of people, that many women offer themselves and are daily employed as wet-nurses, who are labouring under dreadful and infectious diseases. Yet, supposing you can arrive at a satisfactory assurance in this point, there is a certain cleansing quality in the milk of a woman immediately after child-bearing, exceedingly necessary for the new-born babe, in order to prepare its stomach and bowels for future food—this you very rarely can obtain from a wet-nurse.

There is yet a further evil to be dreaded ; as it is through necessity alone that a woman will desert her own infant, and take another to her breast, she may be induced, by the advantage she gains, to conceal her being again with child, and continue to suckle the infant till it pines away, and dies for want of proper nourishment. Thousands have been sacrificed by these means.

Should they however escape, in either case they are, too generally, miserable beings: for, in consequence of the first, diseases of the glands, known by the vulgar name of the king's evil, and other terrible complaints, succeed; and in the latter, the the rickets, watry gripes, and many other maladies, proceeding from a weakly and relaxed habit of body, most commonly ensue.

On the other hand, disease and death are the usual consequences of the present erroneous method of bringing children up by hand. Scarcely one in four of these little innocents live to get over the cutting of their teeth; and the vitiated blood of those that escape, occasioned by improper nourishment, generally renders them infirm, or short-lived. Almost every complaint to which children are subject, appears to me to proceed originally from an improper management of them; for the young of all other animals are full of health and vigour.

And moreover, independently of these misfortunes, the future happiness of the parent herself is greatly interested in this maternal concern, as it generally falls out that those children who are neglected by their mothers during their infant years, forget all duty and affection towards them, when such mothers are in the decline of life; and this contempt from a child is nothing less than plunging a dagger into the breast of its parent; and besides the cruel pangs which she must unavoidably experience from this want of duty, daily observation convinces us that widows frequently suffer not a little, even in the common conveniencies of life, by the means of those very children, who if properly educated would have probably become their support and comfort.

Such are the melancholy prospects attending the present unnatural practice of wet, and dry nursing; from which a curse is oftentimes entailed upon a generation, of which parents ought to esteem themselves

the authors. How terrible soever these things appear, I esteem it my duty to acquaint mothers in particular, what a risk they run in thus hazarding the health and lives of their children, together with their own present and future happiness; and sincerely hope I may imprint the same objections upon them, that daily experience in my profession presents to me, against these pernicious customs.

O! that I could prevail upon my fair countrywomen to become still more lovely in the sight of men! Believe it not, when it is insinuated, that your bosoms are less charming, for having a dear little cherub at your breast. I speak from the feelings of a man, and of one too who has an universal and generous love for the virtuous part of your sex. Trust me, there is no husband could withstand the fond solicitations of an endearing wife, would she be earnest in her desire of bringing up her own children. Rest assured, when he beholds the object of his soul cherishing and sup-

porting in her arms the propitious reward of wedlock, and fondly traces his own lineaments in the darling boy, it recalls a thousand delicate sensations to a generous mind. Perhaps he drops a sympathetic tear in recollecting the painful throes of the mother, which she chearfully bore to make him such an inestimable present. His love, tenderness, and gratitude, being thus engaged—with what raptures must he behold her, still carefully intent upon the preservation of his own image?

How ardent soever such an one's affections might be before matrimony, a scene like this will more firmly rivet the pleasing fetters of love:—for though a beautiful virgin must ever kindle emotions in a man of sensibility; a chaste and tender wife, with a little one at her breast, is certainly, to her husband, the most exquisitely enchanting object upon earth:—and surely, ladies, had fashion but established this laudable custom amongst you, it would prove so truly amiable, as not only to excite the emulation of

your maiden friends to worthy conquests,
but also raise their ambition to shine in characters thus dignified. How greatly then would you contribute to the felicity of your own families, and of mankind in general!

LETTER VI.

THE MANAGEMENT OF INFANTS FROM
THE BIRTH.

LETTER VI.

*The management of infants from the birth —
with directions for putting them to the
breast.*

HAPPY, thrice happy woman, now become a joyful mother, nurturing her young! Say, tell me, you who know the rapturous delight, how complete is the bliss of enfolding in your longing arms the dear dear fruits of all your pains? — pains now no more remembered. Long may you preserve the darling, and be doubly blest in its future beauty, health, and virtue!

I am not unmindful, my charming friends, of the prejudices necessary to be conquered, before so material a benefit to mankind, as that which I am to picture out in this letter, can be generally obtained. In my last, the misfortunes attending the neglect of this duty were fully explained, and

as I have frequently succeeded amongst the private circle of my friends, by addressing their understanding, I trust to the candour of the more ingenuous sex, for my success in public. My endeavour therefore throughout shall be to convince you that I have reason and truth on my side. Happy then shall I think myself, and amply rewarded for my trouble, if I am fortunate enough to meet with your approbation; as your observance of the rules laid down in this little manual must necessarily follow. Much depends upon your maternal care in the first stage of life; it is a pleasing duty, to which you are honourably called upon, both by Nature and the custom of all nations.

I am truly sensible that, according to the present mistaken manner of suckling and rearing children, the business is a fatigue which frightens many at the first attempt; it is a method altogether culpable and unnatural. To this letter particularly belongs the first management of them. In my next I shall point out the subsequent errors,

and lay down some general rules, that will not only prove beneficial to the child, but make the task of suckling easy and delightful to the mother: even the polite and gay may chearfully undertake this, at present, laborious employment, without greatly interfering with a social life—for the gloomy ideas of a nursery will vanish. The paths of Nature are easy and delightful. Come then, my fair, and let us follow her, step by step.

We have before observed that a child brings its immediate nourishment into the world with its birth. Man is born in sorrow. The fatigue and pain of delivery, both to the mother and the child, require rest; and generally, where no improper means are used, they both directly fall into a sweet refreshing sleep; during which time the milky vessels of the breast are dilated. Thus, with prudent management, in a short time a small flow of milk will be obtained. The child, replete with nourishment at its birth, awakes equally refreshed with the

mother, and by eagerly sucking the nipple encourages its more plentiful supply.

Sometimes there may be a little inconvenience with the first child; but this is rendered still greater by keeping it away, perhaps two or three days, from the mother, and suffering her attendants to draw her breasts, which generally occasions sore nipples. The gentle, easy, and frequent suction of an infant, will not only prevent this inconvenience, but gradually invite the milk, thereby relieving the mother from a troublesome burthen: the nipple also, by this means, will be drawn out, so that the child may suck without further difficulty. This is the lesson Nature teaches, and wise are those who observe her precepts.

As to an infant's cloathing, the lighter it is, and the more unconfined, the better; very little covering is necessary, and the future deformities of shape, &c. not to mention the deplorable loss of health, sometimes proceed from the dress being

too heavy and confined, at its first entrance into life.

I am entirely against an infant's receiving any nourishment until it can be put to the breast; and much more so against cramming it with what nurses call pap. The stomach is not yet fit for any other food than what Nature has prepared. Art cannot produce a diet with such an affinity to animal blood, as to render it proper for the tender bowels of a new-born child.

The cries of an infant are generally occasioned by the uneasiness it suffers, either from its dress, or in consequence of thus cramming it. The complaints of children in these early days, as I before observed, and likewise the difficulty in cutting of teeth, which I shall hereafter speak of, proceed almost entirely from this wrong practice. Watery gripes, offensive stools, and most disorders in their bowels, are altogether occasioned by improper food.

Custom has rendered this ridiculous practice so universal, that the good women continually complain it is impossible for a child to remain without food till the milk comes. Let any mother make a fair and unprejudiced trial, and experience will convince her of the truth of our maxim.

How are other animals supported? Nature, in no one part of the creation, is so imperfect, as to be indebted to the wisdom of man to rectify her works. And suppose a case, in which the milk does not flow so soon as in general it is expected, let the child, under such circumstances, be put to the breast again and again; a very little nourishment will at present suffice, and that will most commonly be obtained from the nipple; if it is not, a little warm milk and water, with a small quantity of Lisbon sugar, is the only nourishment, in my opinion, that is proper to be given: this advice I have caused to be strictly followed, and have happily experienced the good effects of it in an infant of my own; who

scarcely received any support from the breast till after the third day from the birth. Follow, my dear ladies, these rules, and where there are an hundred accidents that now happen to mothers, in consequence of milk fevers ; and to children, in consequence of being denied the breast, you will rarely find one. I am convinced of the truth of my assertion by experience, and therefore am the more bold in recommending it to you, and to the public.

LETTER VII.

A NATURAL AND EASY METHOD
OF SUCKLING CHILDREN.

LETTER VII.

*A natural and easy method of suckling children
—This duty proved to be a pleasure rather
than a fatigue.*

NOW then, my nearly interested friends, let us observe those parts of the creation where instinct only can direct, and for once learn a lesson from the tender brute. Behold those animals which are familiar to us, how successful they are in bringing up their young ! Animals that give milk to three, four, five, six, and sometimes more of their offspring at a birth. How well and happy are the dams ! What unremitting care do they take of their nurslings ! They never desert them until time has given to their bodies strength sufficient to provide for themselves. Provident Nature !—and shall mankind alone distrust thy goodness ? Let us learn and be wise. Never more suffer it to pass for an argument, that a woman who is capable of bearing a child has not strength to suckle it, when the little crea-

tures that surround us can rear a whole family at once.

O that I could convince you of the breast alone being a sufficient support for the most robust of children ! Consider Nature well in all her works ! Let ignorance and prejudice no longer prevail ! Believe this solemn truth, almost every woman is capable of supporting her babe ; and great will prove the advantages, both to herself and her infant. When it is confined altogether to the breast, it gains strength every day, and defies disease. The mother, under these circumstances, would not again conceive so quickly, and miscarriages would thereby be, in a great measure, prevented ; unless hurried on by frequent bleedings, and other mistaken practices.

If, for the sake of your families, you value your own lives, attend to this indisputable fact. You yourselves know how many women are ruined in their health by not suckling their children ; and what

numbers are continually sacrificed by unskilful methods of treatment, at the time of their delivery. You may—you should support your young; the task is easy and delightful, and the thriving child rewards your pains. It is not laborious. I would not wish to see you slaves. The tender delicacy of your frame forbids the very thought. The method is plain and easy—only follow Nature.

Sleep is essentially necessary to life, and that the stomach should sometimes be at rest, is as essentially necessary to health; both these things the mother and child equally require. Thus the slavish part of the business is set aside; for it is an absurd and erroneous custom, after stuffing it continually in the day, to keep a child at the breast all night. This counter-acts the operations of Nature, not only by depriving it of its rest, but also, from a constant fullness, the powers of the infant-body are prevented from exerting themselves in a proper

manner upon the aliment received. Hence the stomach and bowels are enfeebled, and thereby rendered incapable of producing such wholesome nourishment as a child would otherwise obtain from its food : to which grand purpose, sound sleep and abstinence are equally conducive.

On the other hand, the mother, being continually disturbed during the night, is also prevented from assimilating that good and perfect milk, which would otherwise be produced from the food of the day. Hence she becomes ill, grows tired of her task, and the crude milk proves noxious to the weakened bowels of the infant. Thus disappointment and death frequently succeed.

I know it will be urged by some that it is impossible to keep children quiet and at rest during the night, and that they cry for food. Let them be managed from the birth agreeably to the directions here given, and then I believe few persons will complain of

their being troublesome. One reason why children do not sleep well by night is, that they are indulged too much in the cradle by day, when they should have exercise. Another still greater reason, I am inclined to think, proceeds from pain, occasioned by improper food, in the first passages ; for I will venture to affirm that almost every child's bowels, from the present wrong management, are in a state of disease, which too frequently grows up with it into life ; and thus in infancy the lurking cause of a bad constitution is oftentimes established.

When their little stomachs, irritated by too large a quantity, and the bad quality of food, become somewhat empty ; a pain, probably like what we call the heart-burn, and acidities at the stomach, awakens them from their disturbed slumbers ; and these little creatures can then only discover their uneasiness by crying. Hence nurses, partly for their own quiet, and partly through a

mistaken notion that children cry only for nourishment, cram them until they are quite gorged. Such infants eagerly devour whatever is given them, because the reception of food takes off that too great sensibility of the stomach which caused the pain. A similar effect to this, grown persons, troubled with the complaints I have now mentioned, must every day experience upon taking nourishment; for it always affords a present relief.

Four or five times in the twenty-four hours are sufficient for a child to receive the breast, and let the following rules be nearly observed. About six or seven in the morning, after which the child may be allowed an hour or two's sleep;—again, an hour after the mother has breakfasted—and a third time, if she pleases, before dinner—a fourth time at five or six o'clock in the evening, being two or three hours after dinner—and lastly, between ten and eleven, just before she goes to rest.

Now, by those mothers who have servants to take off the laborious part of the management of children, this surely cannot be deemed a fatigue; that the task itself is a pleasure, the fondness of nurses towards children at the breast fully proves; and that it is an indispensable duty, the feelings of human nature evidently proclaim.

In the early months sleep may be indulged during the day, but exercise should also at proper intervals be given to children. As they grow stronger, sleep should be less encouraged, and exercise encreased.

There are several points of management that I have no fault to find with, and, amongst others, think it needless to dwell upon the necessity of keeping children dry and clean: It is so evident, that few nurses are culpable in these particulars. But as to rocking children, the custom is altogether absurd. He was an ingenious man who invented a mouse-trap, though none but a fool first thought of a cradle; it was

certainly invented to save the attendants trouble, for which, by the bye, they suffer more in return : I never permitted a cradle to disgrace my nursery. Infants, if well, sleep without this lullaby-labour, and such forced dosings generally render them peevish and watchful in the night; which is the most proper time both for them and their nurses to enjoy their rest.

At the end of six or seven months, when the four first teeth ought to appear, children should be kept awake, and exercised as much as possible; by which time, if managed properly, they will generally gain strength enough to shoot these teeth, and the others will in due course be cut with ease.

Thus you will avoid an evil that sweeps away great numbers, of which, however, I shall speak more fully in another letter; for it is intirely owing to the weakness of their bodies that children cut their teeth with so

much difficulty, and that it is attended with fever, convulsions, and death.

This weakness of body is but little understood; for if a child be bloated with fat, which too generally happens when it is improperly fed, the parents and their friends call it a fine child, and admire how it thrives. When, alas! that very fat is the disease which renders its constitution thus feeble; for if the butcher did not kill lambs and calves when they become immoderately fat, they likewise would die as frequently as children. Which death may be justly attributed to the preposterous method, so generally in use, of giving them too much crude unsalutary nourishment; and not managing them in other respects as Nature requires, to strengthen the body from the food received.

After what has been advanced concerning the early part of infant-management, give me leave to observe that the argu-

ments enforced upon this important subject are submitted to the consideration of those mothers, who are desirous of preferring a rational system to bigoted maxims and opinions. I would wish them to be attended to, and I trust that they will merit their approbation. I do not expect the foregoing rules to be invariably adopted from the birth. I know very well, and it is obvious to those who have been attentive to children, that infants require some more, and others less attendance, especially during the first month or two; and a certain time is necessary, even under the most prudent management, to accustom them to our wished-for habits. There is a wide difference between knowing what is right and doing it; and *oftentimes* although we may be desirous of strictly following the most prudent maxims, difficulties will unexpectedly arise in the first attempts. Let me therefore desire you to aim at the above regulations, which by perseverance will

soon become practicable ; and then, determine for yourselves, how greatly they will contribute to your own ease and comfort, as well as to the advantage of your children.

LETTER VIII.

THE PROPER METHOD OF WEANING
CHILDREN.

LETTER VIII.

The proper method of weaning children.

IN my last letter I condemned the present erroneous method of suckling and feeding children, and recommended a plain and easy way of rearing them to six or seven months old, upon a rational plan, pointed out by Nature in many different parts of the creation; and which most probably was strictly followed by mankind in the early ages of the world, before luxury, pride, and indolence crept into society. Antient history never could have boasted of so many strong and valiant men, had not mothers, in their infancy, given strength and vigour to their constitutions; and the cause of the present pusillanimous, feeble, weakly, and diseased race of mortals, may in some measure be ascribed to the want of this earliest maternal care.

Let us talk with the plain and simple husbandman, who has a nursery of trees

under his direction ; he will tell us it is not sufficient for the stocks to be good of their kind, for unless they be secured from rude winds, and properly cultivated, so that they may receive nourishment, they will never thrive.

It is literally the same in animal life ; there are unfortunate mothers who daily and woefully experience the truth of this argument. How many women are blest with fine children, not a blemish, nor the mark of a disease, about them at their birth ; and yet before many months are past, for want of prudent care and proper nourishment, do they not waste away and die ? I need not say more, the tears of many of my gentle readers, at the unhappy recollection, will sufficiently testify the fact. May such tears prove a warning for their future conduct, and, trust me, my honoured matrons, your sorrow will be turned into joy—a joy of the tenderest nature, generous and truly laudable !

Let not man in the vanity of his heart triumph in a superiority over the fair sex! for to them alone it belongs to lay the foundation, not of what he is, but what he should be—healthy, strong, and vigorous. You, ladies, form an hero in the cradle, and courage is received from the breast. Gratitude in return demands a protection to you from man. With yourselves therefore it remains to render him capable of that protection. Thus Nature, my fair ones, ordained your importance in the creation.

But to return to the husbandman: he will again tell us, that when his trees have received their infant strength, and their roots begin to shoot, it is necessary to transplant them from the nursery to a more extensive soil, in order to arrive at their natural perfection. So you, my friends, having brought the child through its infant state, by the tender nourishment of the breast, must at the time of weaning (which in my opinion is best postponed until it be near a twelvemonth old) transplant your

little nursery likewise to a more extensive soil: that is, you must afford it more copious nourishment, in order to bring it to maturer life.

Yet, as great skill and caution are required on the part of the husbandman, in this business of transplanting, so great judgment and care must be shewn by you, in this your province of weaning children; for custom has so far deviated from Nature, as to render the greatest circumspection necessary to point out the happy medium.

A further care therefore at this time demands our attention. Man, according to the present mode, particularly in England, is greatly supported by animal food. A sudden transition from one extreme to another is always dangerous, and every material alteration, to avoid inconveniencies, should be brought about step by step. If Nature ever intended us to destroy the animals around us for prey, surely we may conclude, this food never could be designed

for our use until such time as we had teeth to eat it.

Many ill consequences arise from persons devouring their meals too eagerly; and if the stomachs of men are oppressed, by not sufficiently chewing their meat, certainly the weak and tender stomachs of children, who have not as yet teeth sufficient to break it, must be still less fit to receive it altogether whole.

Animal food then at this time of life is absolutely forbidden, from reason and reflection; but as it is in some measure necessary to prepare them for their future method of living, broths and jellies may be now given sparingly, and as they encrease in strength and age, more plentifully. Hereby the animal juices are received, which contain the only nourishment in flesh, without any labour to the stomach; and let it be remembered that the juices of full-grown animals are to be preferred to the younger and fat-

tened kind ; but more of this in its proper place.

Let children at this time be fed once or twice a day with about a quarter of a pint of broth, and a little bread mixed in it. When you give a stiff jelly, a large tea cup full is sufficient ; but I would recommend as much warm water, or milk with it, and likewise a little bread. The breast should not be allowed them now so often as when they were wholly confined to that nourishment ; in short, every meal that you thus introduce, should supply one of the stated times of suckling. Thus are they gradually and insensibly weaned from the breast, and accustomed to animal food, without any pining on their parts, or much trouble to the mother.

Having shewn the proper manner of putting a child to the breast, and likewise the most prudent method of taking it away ; we shall in the next letter point out the

safest rules for bringing children up by hand ; but another observation or two will not be improper in this place.

The gravy which runs out of meat upon cutting it when brought to table is exceedingly wholesome, being nothing more than the pure juices of flesh. A few spoonfuls of this beef or mutton gravy, mixed with an equal quantity of warm water, and a little salt, make very good broth. I mention this, because parents generally imagine it to be unwholesome for children ; and oftentimes when I have recommended it, some good old lady has stoutly opposed me, alledging that it fills a child with humours ; whereas, on the contrary, this is the only part of flesh that produces good nourishment.

Here let me protest against the custom of not suffering children to eat salt, for fear of the scurvy ; not making a distinction between salted meats, and salt eaten with meat. In this point also strong prejudices are frequently to be combated with ; for

many a time have I been told by persons of reverent years, that children were not suffered to eat salt in former days ; adding, perhaps with a significant shrug, that the present age think themselves much wiser than their forefathers.

“ Animal food which has been any considerable time in salt becomes hard, and requires more force to break and digest it, proper for nourishment, than weak stomachs are capable of exerting ; consequently salted beef, pork, and such like things, are improper for children.”

Nevertheless, salt in itself is so far from producing the scurvy, that it is now generally supposed to be its greatest antidote ; otherwise, why do so many thousands yearly flock to bathe, and drink sea water ? There is, further, a certain stimulating quality in salt, that greatly promotes digestion ; and whatsoever assists that office, must of course rather contribute to purify the blood than to render it foul ; which is the supposed

cause of the present frequently imagined, but oftentimes only a fashionable disease—called the scurvy.

I have been repeatedly thanked for the following information. A table spoonful or two of salt put into a quart of spring water is a most excellent wash to cleanse the skin, especially if the face be well rubbed with a coarse cloth some little time after it has been washed with the salt and water. By this means the pores of the skin will be kept open, and no obstructed perspiration will remain, which is the cause of carbuncles and those red pimples which are generally mistaken for the scurvy. It is this stimulating and cleansing quality of salt that makes the sea water so useful to those who are troubled with eruptions ; therefore by the above proportion, the water is rendered still more efficacious, and will clear the face and neck of heats and pimples which frequently disturb the ladies.

I cannot bear the modern prostitution of the words *female delicacy* ; the duties of a mother are by some thought to be indelicate, and the appellation is now given only to disease and sickness ; for a woman must become a walking ghost to be stiled *truly delicate*. I frequently lament that the idea is not more strictly confined to mental accomplishments ; nevertheless, I wish my fair friends to bestow every rational and laudable attention to render their persons neat, elegant, and engaging. I cannot conclude this letter better than by observing, that although beauty stands like a cypher when alone, every additional qualification increases its merits ten-fold ; and the less sensible of it the possessor herself appears to be, the more it will always be regarded by the admiring world.

LETTER IX.

THE SAFEST METHOD OF BRINGING
CHILDREN UP BY HAND.

LETTER IX.

The safest method of bringing children up by hand.

WE have hitherto, my fair philosophers, been carefully observant of, and obedient to, the laws of Nature. Her paths are infinitely various. Every step we take affords new and engaging prospects. We have traced man from the first period of his existence, and have followed reason and instinct, to give him strength and vigour in the earliest part of life. So fair a dawning promises a robust and healthy constitution ; nevertheless necessity obliges us to proceed to a further speculation.

Let it therefore be the business of this letter to enquire how nearly art can supply the place of Nature. Let us endeavour to point out a method to those unfortunate mothers, who are, through necessity, deprived of the happy enjoyment of suckling their own children. It may not prove un-

worthy the attention of those who, by choice, commit them to the care of others. I propose to carry my observations in this letter, as far as my instructions have been given to the valuable and truly praise-worthy matrons, whose duty to their family over-balances every other consideration. By and by, when the suckling is about to be weaned, and the dry-nursed child brought equally forward, the rules of diet will be the same for both ; on which account I went no farther in my last than the proper period for introducing broths, jellies, &c. All other considerations will be brought under general directions.

Mother's milk we have shewn to be the natural and most proper support for tender infants ; it is a digested fluid, already animalized, and therefore fittest for the nourishment of children. This remark also shews that the infant body is, by nature, designed to receive only a liquid nourishment ; a hint particularly necessary to be attended to at this time, as it altogether

obviates the general objections against confining children to milk, in preference to thicker victuals, of which I shall speak more fully before I conclude this letter.

We have taken notice how tender the stomachs and bowels of infants are, and have thence inferred, that almost every complaint they are afflicted with proceeds from the improper quality of their food ; and the too large quantity given them also encreases the disease. We took notice that the digestive powers of a new-born child are incapable of producing a kind nutriment even from bread, and therefore exclaimed against feeding them with what is called pap. But suppose it to be otherwise. What a poor pittance of support does such a mother allow to her child, who gives it only bread and water !

I have seen many fatal instances of such strange management. We ourselves should think it hard indeed, and nothing but dire

necessity could compel us to live thus sparingly ; besides, how would our flesh waste and our strength decay ? If so, surely it cannot be proper for an infant, whose bones have not as yet strength sufficient to support its frame. How is it possible for a child to thrive under such treatment ?—Perhaps some will allow a little milk to be mixed with its food, but very sparingly ; because they imagine it stuffs the stomach, and fills a child full of phlegm. Idle and ridiculous are these, and all other arguments that can be urged against this natural and salubrious diet.

Milk is here spoken of in general terms, because I intend in a subsequent letter to examine the several properties of different milks, and to remark the purpose to which each kind seems best adapted. Cows milk being mostly used, and in my opinion the properest, in general, to answer our present design, I would therefore be understood to recommend that, if no other kind is particularly mentioned.

I know very well that many persons, and perhaps some gentlemen in the practice of physic, will differ from me in opinion, when I prefer cows milk to every other kind of nourishment, in the early months, where it is necessary to bring a child up by hand. Let me beg of them only to make the experiment, as I speak from experience, and if they have reason to censure me afterwards, we shall meet upon equal terms; till then, at least, I shall hope for candour from every one.

It has frequently been suggested to me, that cows milk is too rich, abounding also with too much cream, and that being of a fat oily nature, will relax more than strengthen. But, however, this fault is not much to be apprehended from the milk used in and about London. Supposing it to be the case in the country, which I am far from allowing, you may let it stand till the cream rises to the top, and use the skimmed milk; or by boiling deprive it of the greatest part of this oily quality, which collects itself upon the

surface, and may then be readily taken off; or it may be diluted with water.

These doubts being removed, the milk of cows appears, I think, to be the properest substitute we can make for that of the breast; and will answer best, after the first month or two, without boiling, unless it purges the child; in which case boiling it will generally prevent the inconvenience, proceeding in all likelihood from its oily particles. I have no objection to a small quantity of Lisbon sugar being mixed with it, particularly if the child be costive; and indeed this may frequently be of use, to prevent its too great tendency to become acid, from whence disorders of the bowels sometimes arise.†

† Let it be remembered, that through this system of nursing children are supposed to be free from disease, and that I am to be considered not as the physician, but as the friend; when they are ill, it is the business of those persons who have the care of them to direct a proper food; and upon many occasions milk may be so managed as to prove greatly instrumental, even as a well-adapted nourishment, to their recovery. In too laxative a habit of body,

One remark I shall beg leave to make, which comes in here with propriety. We have taken notice in a former letter of the cleansing quality of mother's milk, upon its first coming into the breast. Now, where children are debarred from receiving it, a substitute of some gentle purgative is highly proper, to give such a stimulus to the bowels as Nature has provided by the mother's means. What I have experienced to be the best calculated for answering this purpose, is something of the following kind.

Suppose we say, *syrup of violets and oil of almonds, of each one ounce, with four or five*

for instance, rice and cinnamon may be added; but then care should be taken that the rice be well boiled in water before it is mixed with the milk. In the watery gripes I frequently direct the following diet for infants: Boil a table spoonful of ground rice, with a little cinnamon, in half a pint of water, till the water is nearly consumed; then add a pint of milk, and let the whole gently simmer for five minutes; strain it through a lawn sieve, and make it palatable with a little sugar. This food corresponds well, in such complaints, with the curative intention.

grains of rhubarb. This composition being shaken, will pretty well unite. A tea spoonful may be given as often as you find it necessary.

In case the milk be thrown up in a curdled state, a small quantity of salt will generally prevent it; a circumstance I would wish to have attended to, as many children are subject to this complaint, and it is a method I have seldom known to fail, unless they are greatly over-fed. Whenever a child throws up the milk, it is to be considered as a complaint, and particularly so if it appears curdled; because it has then passed through the first change it undergoes in the stomach, and consequently discovers that the stomach itself is too feeble to execute its further office; in this case sometimes the stomach abounds with too great an acidity, but more frequently it is loaded and oppressed by the quantity which has been given to the infant. Milk always curdles in the stomach, and it is only a vulgar error to suppose the contrary; for by this

means it becomes a substantial aliment, and affords a proper nourishment to children and other animals; whereas, if it continued in a fluid state, it would contribute but little to their support.

What we have next to observe, is the quantity of milk proper to be given to a new-born child, in the twenty-four hours. What think you, my dear ladies, of a Winchester pint being a sufficient quantity for the day and night? Methinks I hear an exclamation—O barbarous man! Under a pretence of correcting us, he intends to starve the little helpless creatures. Was there ever such a cruelty heard of before? Allow a child only a pint of milk in a day! Why, it would eat two quarts of pap, and still cry for more. Yet, after all surprise, an infant in the month will receive from one pint of milk more real and good nourishment, than from ten quarts of pap, as it is called; indeed I might say more nourishment than from any other kind of support. For, notwithstanding the

juices which afford sustenance are all liquid, it is necessary they should contain the essence of substantial food: and although a man who is accustomed to daily labour would soon be emaciated by living continually upon meats; yet milk alone would support his strength and spirits; because it curdles in the stomach, and thereby becomes a more solid and nutritious aliment. And further, let me again remind you, that not only the human species, but likewise all other animals, receive their continual nourishment from a milky juice which is prepared in their own bodies from the aliment received, as was before explained in the fourth letter.

There are, as we have mentioned, very great errors in the quantities as well as the qualities of infants food. It was before observed, that children's stomachs should not be always crammed. To this it is in a great measure owing that they are so continually puking. A circumstance looked upon by some to be natural and wholesome,

who preposterously encourage this disposition by frequent vomits. But surely, Nature never intended more nourishment to be received, than is necessary for our support. Does any person in a good state of health, after a moderate and proper meal, ever find an inclination to throw it up again? Are the young offspring of other animals constantly puking? How therefore can it be supposed natural for children to do so? A little reflection would soon convince such superficial observers of their error, for you will rarely find a child throw up its food when properly nursed.

If one pint of milk, therefore, in the first week or two, be too little, it is an error on the right side, for it appears to be enough to support the child, and much worse consequences are to be apprehended from giving it too much. We must, every one of us, have often experienced how necessary it is to be hungry, in order to relish our food; and that to be continually in-

dulging palls the appetite. Certainly then, it must be equally necessary that the infant stomach should sometimes know the sense of hunger.

Would not three or four pints of milk in the twenty-four hours support a grown person? If so, undoubtedly one third part is amply sufficient to nourish a new-born child. But I would not be understood to cavil scrupulously for a spoonful or two; I only mean to assist the candid enquirer in this most essential part of the management of children, who are denied the breast.

We come next to ascertain the proper quantity to be given for a meal. A quarter of a pint is fully sufficient to be taken at a time, and let the hours of feeding, as well as every other particular, be regulated according to the rules laid down in the seventh letter. In ten days, or a fortnight, you may encrease the daily allowance a quarter of a pint—and at the end of a month you may allow a pint and a half in the twenty-

four hours—another half-pint may be gradually permitted by the time it is three months old, and this quantity, if the child is voracious, may be still encreased to three pints in the day ; which, I am persuaded, if the milk be good, will prove sufficient : and this allowance will, I hope, cancel the severity of every matron's censure.

Having now given you my thoughts upon this part of infant management, there is but one rational objection that strikes me against the propriety of so plain and simple a method of bringing children up by hand. Their natural food is allowed to be milk—but it may be urged, that the human milk, in consequence of the mother's diet, is more strengthening than that of cows, asses, or any other species of brutes. Granted—but then again this argument equally proves that cows milk partakes more of a vegetable nature than the milk of women ; and, during the early months, all that the advo-

cates for the present custom would contend for, is—what ? pap, panado, &c. which are of the vegetable kind ; and therefore their arguments require no farther answer. Was it proposed to add some proper broths to cows milk, after the first four or five weeks, where there is no circumstance particularly to forbid it, the design would appear reasonable, in supplying the supposed deficiency of the animal property ; and it is a point I would readily join in, nay it is what I mean to recommend towards the end of the third month. I frequently order milk and broth to be mixed together, and think it proper food. But let every such meal, however, as before advised, supply the place of the usual milk. In whatever way you manage children, be careful not to feed them over-much.

There is yet a circumstance of great moment to be attended to, and, if rightly comprehended by my fair pupils, will convince them that the allowance for the earlier months is amply sufficient. It

is the manner in which infants ought to be fed.

Surely it is wrong to put a large boat full of pap into their little mouths, suffering them to swallow the whole of it in the space of a minute; and then perhaps, from their cries, to ply them with a second, which is no sooner down than thrown up again.

We have mentioned the ill consequences of grown persons devouring their victuals too eagerly; and experience must often have convinced every one, that a much less quantity than we generally take, if eaten leisurely, and well chewed, will suffice for a meal; and also that, after such meals, we seem more comfortable, and are inclined to pursue either business or pleasure with far greater ease to ourselves. On the contrary, from a too hasty and hearty meal, the stomach will be distended overmuch, which is always productive of indolence, and a tendency to sleep. The same must

certainly hold good with respect to infants.

Besides, to obtain milk from the breast, Nature wisely obliges them to earn their nourishment by the labour of drawing it. The stream being exceedingly small upon the milk's first coming into the breast, it requires a long time to procure a quarter of a pint; and the very exercise fatigues them before they have received too much. This, in my opinion, fully proves that quantity to be sufficient for a meal.

There is nothing therefore wanting, I hope, to complete our system, but a contrivance to supply the place of the nipple, that the child may still labour to obtain its support; which alone will greatly prevent the error in quantity. I have seen some inventions of this kind, by means of parchment or leather sewed to the pointed end of an horn, which is no bad thought, and capable of great improvement. The Hollanders, when they travel, have a small

pewter vessel, somewhat in the form of a cone, which is filled with milk, and a piece of sponge covered with a linnen cloth is tied over the smaller end. This serves the children very well as an artificial nipple: for it is observed that a Dutch woman seldom or never gives suck to her child before strangers.

We have plainly demonstrated that infant nourishment, particularly in the early months, is designed by Nature to be altogether liquid — against such contrivances, therefore, I cannot see an objection.

Would you, my fair friends, undertake this pursuit, from the happy fertility of female imagination, I am certain a little experience would point out to you a ready and convenient method to answer every purpose; and I am thoroughly satisfied the happy consequences would amply reward your pains — by preserving many dear little innocents, that daily fall a sacrifice to repletion or over-feeding.

P. S. Since this book made its first appearance, I have contrived a milk-pot for my own nursery upon the above principles; it appears to my family, and to many of my patients, preferable to those now in use, and may probably be still further improved. For the satisfaction of my readers I shall give a description of it. This pot is somewhat in form like an urn; it contains a little more than a quarter of a pint; its handle, and neck or spout, are not unlike those of a coffee-pot, except that the neck of this arises from the very bottom of the pot, and is very small; in short, it is upon the same principle as those gravy-pots which separate the gravy from the oily fat. The end of the spout is a little raised, and forms a roundish knob, somewhat in appearance like a small heart; this is perforated by three or four small holes: a piece of fine rag is tied loosely over it, which serves the child to play with instead of the nipple, and through which, by the infant's sucking, the milk is constantly strained. The child is equally sa-

tisfied as it would be with the breast; it never wets him in the least; he is obliged to labour for every drop he receives in the same manner as when at the breast; and, greatly in recommendation of this contrivance, the nurses confess it is more convenient than a boat, and that it saves a great deal of trouble in the feeding of an infant; which is the greatest security to parents, that their servants will use it, when they themselves are not present.

The model of this milk-pot is left with Mr. Morrison, at the Three Kings, in Cheapside, for the benefit of the public. The milk-pots are now also made in the Queen's-ware, in order that the poor may be accommodated; any person, therefore, at a very trifling expence, may be convinced of their utility by making the experiment.

LETTER X.

A GENERAL MANAGEMENT OF
CHILDREN, FROM THE TIME OF
WEANING, TILL THEY ARE
ABOUT TWO YEARS OLD.

L E T T E R X.

A general management of children, from the time of weaning, till they are about two years old—with observations upon the cutting of teeth.

I AM just now returned from a nursery, where, with sincere pleasure, I beheld a happy mother with a pretty little puppet at her breast, which she had the satisfaction of saving in its earliest days, by her amiable affection and tenderness. An infant born under melancholy circumstances, when the mother herself was afflicted with a terrible quincy in her throat, and had been confined to a sick chamber five or six weeks before her delivery. No one expected the life of the child, and the mother's was equally doubtful. Nothing but the greatest care on her part could have saved the infant; and had it been committed to any other person, the diseased state of its bowels at the birth would, probably, very soon have put a period to its existence.

Judge, ye considerate fair, indulge with me the pleasing reflections of this good woman! Behold her, fondling at the breast a smiling boy, to whom she not only gave a being, but generously preferred his welfare, and dared, even contrary to the advice of her friends, to suckle him, thereby endangering her own, to preserve the life of her child. May gratitude and duty expand within his breast, and prompt him virtuously to reward this truly maternal affection! May he, in future years, become the pleasure and support of her declining life!

This amiable mother has three other little ones, that for health and beauty stand almost unrivalled. All nurtured under her own wing — supported by her breast. What an encouragement is this to follow Nature! Her heart was never torn by the bitter reflection of not having done her duty to her family. Example glorious! worthy of praise — worthy of imitation.

But to return to our present point: the suckling being weaned, and the dry-nursed child brought equally forward; we shall now join our different nurseries together, and endeavour to make them thrive under one general direction.

I must, however, beg leave to mention, that as I before advised to have the child kept to the breast till it is near twelve months old, and have also pointed out the prudent manner of introducing broths and jellies, preparative to weaning it intirely; so this letter is designed to recommend a proper management of infants from the period of one to two years of age.

The best method likewise having been laid down for bringing children up by hand upon those principles that approach nearest to Nature, which surely renders them unexceptionable; and having indulged them with broths and jellies earlier than the sucking child; I shall suppose these also gradually brought on to the

twelfth month, and thence proceed with both together.

I most earnestly recommend that they be strictly confined to the following diet, and not fed oftener than three, or four times at most, in the twenty-four hours. The quantity for each meal may now with propriety be considerably encreased ; it will be longer therefore of consequence before the stomach becomes empty.

Thus for instance, let their breakfast, at six or seven in the morning, be half a pint of new milk with about two ounces of bread in it—the second meal should be half a pint of good broth with the same quantity of bread ; let this be given about ten or eleven in the morning—the third meal, about two or three in the afternoon, should be broth in like manner—and their supper, about six in the evening, new milk and bread, the same as for breakfast. When you substitute jellies, or gravies, for broth, let them be always

plain and simple; and a less quantity will prove sufficient. †

If children are thirsty between their meals, a little barley-water and milk may be given them; but I would not too frequently encourage this custom.

From hence, the general intention appears throughout, to decrease the quantity of milk, as you introduce other substantial and proper nourishment — though I would always allow children a pint of milk each day.

Biscuits, sweet-meats, sugar-plumbs, &c. all which tend to spoil the appetite, are highly improper; and ought to be looked

† Under the article *salop* in the Family Physician, p. 26, you will find proper directions to prepare an excellent strengthening food, by mixing *salop* with milk, which makes it of the consistence of a custard. This preparation of milk is highly proper for children, invalids, and aged persons; and it is withal a very agreeable and palatable nourishment.

upon as one of the pernicious effects of luxury. Where is there a child, unaccustomed to such indulgence, that would not be equally pleased with a crust of bread? It is not my business here to enter so philosophically into the doctrine of nourishment, as to contend with those who suppose it altogether to proceed from the saccharine qualities of food. But allowing them the utmost force of their arguments, I answer, that Nature will always prove the best chymist, to separate these sugar-like particles from the aliment we take in. So much for the present with regard to the regulation of their diet.

As to other particulars: Little or no sleep should now be permitted in the day. Air and exercise are greatly to be recommended. Let them rise as early as you please; and the sooner they are put to bed, when the evening begins to shut in, the better. Their cloathing should now, and indeed always, be light and easy. By no means suffer children to be confined in very

warm rooms, but accustom them by degrees to those variations of the seasons, which they will be compelled to struggle with in future life.

It is a great misfortune for children to be brought up too tenderly. Should Providence hereafter design them to contend with difficulties, how little capable will they be of conquering them? The child thus nurtured most commonly grows up too delicate and feeble to encounter hardships. Should necessity, or chance, hereafter lead him to seek his fortune on the raging seas, or to bear his part in the hardy service of his country by land; how pitiful will such a man appear! How unequal to the necessary toils of sieges, storms, and tempests!—But, however, this great error, to the credit of good mothers be it confessed, is of late years much corrected.

I beg leave, my fair friends, to say something concerning their being put upon their feet. With respect to the time, the strength

of the child must determine that period. Of this be assured, that all children will shew an inclination to walk, as soon as their bones have acquired a firmness sufficient to support the body. I am fearful many heavy children are injured by exciting their feeble efforts to walk too soon. Doubtless it is a convenience and ease to nurses to set them upon their feet, as they do not then require exercise in the arms ; and consequently are not so great a trouble, and fatigue, to those who have the care of them. But it is a fault entirely to be condemned, and what I particularly caution you against, because, whoever you may have to attend upon your children, they will certainly encourage them to walk, for reasons above mentioned.

Therefore throw aside your leading-strings, and your back-strings, and every other crafty invention which tends to put children forwarder than Nature designed. Our young plants are to be cultivated without art. The industrious gardener, it

is true, can boast of his exotics, and early fruits, by forcing their growth. Yet say, ye sons of Epicurus, are your grapes or pines thus raised equal to the produce of their natural climate? And notwithstanding the merit of your gardener, who is thus capable of gratifying this high zest of luxurious extravagance; even in this your boasted pride, a simple clown would be wise enough to expose your folly, by the honest preference which he would give to Nature. Such as the fruits are, watery and insipid; such also are the plants thus forced, weakly and tender; susceptible of the slightest injuries, and exposed to continual dangers: Such likewise are the poor feeble infants, forced upon their legs before Nature has designed them; while others, managed without art, like fruitful vines defy the inclement seasons, and triumph in their natural strength and vigour.

I do not mean, from what has been said upon this subject, to prevent them, when they really shew an inclination to walk, but

to admonish you against being too precipitate. It is in my opinion a good method to suffer the little creatures first to crawl upon a carpet, or any other convenient place ; permitting them to tumble about as much as they please. By this means an exercise will be given to the body and limbs, without their continuing in one position long enough to hazard a distortion, from too great a weight of body. Thus let them, by degrees, learn to walk upright, which their own inclinations, in imitation of those about them, will prompt them to, full as soon as Nature designed.

I shall now beg leave to offer a few hints with respect to the teeth. A circumstance this materially to be attended to, as woeful experience daily convinces us.

Children are teased with cutting of teeth from four or five months, till they are two years old, and upwards ; nay, some are so backward as not to have their compleat number till they are turned of three years

old. I shall not enter into the distinction of teeth, but speak of them in general, so as to give a competent idea of the precautions I mean to recommend.

It is also very uncertain with respect to the exact time of their shooting any of their teeth, but this also, I believe, chiefly depends upon the strength of the constitution; and if the rules laid down in the preceding letters be properly observed, you will generally find children cut all their teeth by the time they are about two years old: You will, likewise, rarely meet with an instance of their being cut with difficulty. It has been already taken notice of, that the reason of their being backward in their teeth, and so many children lost on this account, is entirely owing to a weakness of body, which is a fact that scarcely any one will deny.

Yet, where the constitution is not strong enough of itself, as a great assistance may

be obtained by lancing of the gums, let not a false tendernefs prevent fond mothers from allowing fuch relief to their little babes, in the excruciating tortures they fuffer by the cutting of teeth. The operation is not to be deemed pain; for, if you put any thing with a fharp edge into their mouths, they will fave you the trouble of doing it, by preffing hard againft the inftrument, and cutting the gum themfelves.

When the teeth are difcernible to the fight or touch, there is very little fenfe of feeling in the gum; their tortures proceed from the fenfibility of a fine membrane which envelopes the tooth. If that membrane is fufficiently divided, although the gum fhould again unite, there will be no more trouble; for teeth thus lanced will gradually advance without future pain. Never, therefore, I fay, let a prejudice like this hinder you from relieving fuch poor little helpless creatures.

There are many persons who, about the age of twenty, have two, and sometimes four, additional teeth, at the furthest part of the jaws; and, from the time of life in which they appear, they are called the teeth of wisdom. Let me desire such wise ones, sensible of the pain upon this occasion, to reflect how insupportable it must be to many infants, who, perhaps, are cutting the whole of their teeth almost at once; at a time too, when their tender frames are but little capable of bearing pain. Many grown persons are obliged to have such teeth lanced; let them declare how much relief they found from this simple, but useful operation.

Candid reasoning, from experience, is the surest way to conquer prejudices; and those who give themselves leave to think upon the point with candour, will, I doubt not, allow the force of this argument.

It may not be unseasonable, in this place, to give a caution, which those who lance

teeth would do well to observe; as carelessness or ignorance in the operation frequently frustrates the intended benefit. Let me advise you not to depend upon old women, or nurses, who undertake to do it with crooked sixpences, and such like ineffectual means.

We took notice a little above, that the pain arises, not from the gum, but from the sensibility of a fine membrane which envelopes the teeth. It is not therefore sufficient to make a longitudinal incision into the gum, that being too commonly done without dividing this membrane; in which case, instead of good, it does hurt. After cutting through the gum, the instrument should be drawn round the tooth, and the person should be satisfied that it grates in every part against the tooth, which will effectually divide this too sensible membrane. Where the gum is exceedingly tough, a transverse incision ought likewise to be made, and with these precautions the operation will assuredly succeed. Parents can-

not be too careful in this particular, for I have often observed ill consequences from the carelessness before mentioned.

In my observations upon children that are lost between the age of five months and three years, I have found they are generally carried off either by sudden convulsions, or what is called a tooth-fever, or a wasting of the body; in the two last cases the scene likewise is commonly closed with convulsive fits.

The original cause of these disasters having been frequently taken notice of to proceed from the wrong management of children, it appears equally evident to me, that the immediate cause of these fits almost always arises from want of strength in the constitution to cut the teeth. It is true the bowels sometimes are greatly affected, which indeed generally attends a wasting of the body; but then the immediate cause of such complaints at this

time is most commonly the teeth. For if children are capable of enduring the improper aliments before mentioned in their most tender state, during the first four or five months; surely, without some more active principle, the vital powers would not afterwards be by them alone subdued.

This makes me particularly solicitous to recommend lancing of the gums before it is too late to assist children; being firmly persuaded that many might be saved, who daily fall a sacrifice to those complaints for want of it.

Amongst many other instances that I could relate, to shew the necessity of admitting this operation before the strength of the child be decayed, and its body wasted, I shall conclude this letter with a remarkable case of this sort.

A poor woman in the neighbourhood, some time since, brought her child to me;

he was apparently a stout fine boy, and then about nine months old. She desired my advice for an eruption the child had all over his body, which she called scurvy; but I found it nothing more than some pimples proceeding from the improper quality of its food; and in fact, notwithstanding the chubby appearance of the boy (which in reality was nothing more than bloated fat) he was actually of a very weakly frame, as appears by the sequel — and I think it necessary, as a further confirmation of my assertion, to inform you that his father was at this time between sixty and seventy, his mother not less than four or five and thirty years of age.

Near or quite six months afterwards, the same woman came to beg the favour of me to look at her child again, who, she said, was dying. I saw an infant worn away to a mere skeleton, and upon inquiry found it to be the same chubby fat boy I had seen before. He lay panting for breath, and had

taken little or no nourishment for twenty-four hours. Upon examining the little patient, there was not a tooth appeared. The cause of the disease therefore was immediately evident to me ; but I told her it was too late to be of service, for I found the child could not recover.

However, to satisfy the mother, I advised lancing the gums. To the astonishment of every one about the child, sixteen large teeth were cut out ; but the gums being very much hardened, for want of this operation, it was with no small difficulty now performed. The immediate relief which the child received, surprised them all still more. From a convulsive state that he before lay in, he instantly recovered, took notice of every body in the room, and during the time I staid, eagerly devoured a considerable quantity of nourishment.

The grateful parent thanked me a thousand times, and reflected upon herself for delaying to apply to me before. But alas !

I foresaw it was only a temporary relief, his strength being utterly exhausted. I left her without giving the least hopes of his recovery, and the next morning the child died. A reflection upon this case, I take for granted, is entirely needless. It is evident, had the teeth been cut in due time, this fatal accident would not have happened.

It is, indeed, a topic of serious concern; but as it comes under the class of diseases to which infants are subject, it cannot be enlarged upon in this little volume. Some opinions, and medical observations, are thrown out in the introduction to these letters, which, if carefully attended to, may assist the intelligent parent in her endeavours to preserve the lives of such little innocents. A table of births and infant burials is also inserted, which proves the melancholy truths I am aiming to establish.

LETTER XI.

A GENERAL MANAGEMENT OF
CHILDREN.

LETTER XI.

A general management of children, from two years old, till they leave the nursery.

THE cultivation of the mind I have intentionally reserved for the subject of my next letter ; for which reason I shall now finish my observations upon nursing, and endeavour to point out the safest and most prudent method of introducing children into the family way of living.

At length, after surmounting the difficulties and inconveniences attending the cutting of their teeth, we have now set them upon their legs ; to the no small joy of the mother, and the relief of those servants whose business it is to wait upon them.

We have hitherto permitted bread, milk, and the juices only of flesh ; and before we advance any further, I beg leave to make the following remarks, by which my intelligent readers may profit.

The food of man, in all its various shapes, however tortured and disguised, is still confined to animal and vegetable productions.

Of vegetables, bread is the most valuable preparation, as the experience of ages proves. That made from wheat flour is still the most strengthening, and ever to be preferred by those who have the means of obtaining it.

The milk of cows, although it may be supposed not to partake so much of a strengthening nature as the human milk, those creatures feeding altogether upon vegetables, is, nevertheless, to be considered as a food partly animal, and partly vegetable, prepared also, under an all-wise direction.

Gravies, jellies, and broths, we know, are animal juices ; either spontaneously flowing from flesh, upon cutting it, after

it is dressed ; or obtained by a maceration of it in water.

From these reflections, therefore, it appears, that in the regimen already permitted, the most valuable supplies of life are granted, and in a manner the best adapted to infant constitutions ; requiring but little exertion of the digestive faculties, and gradually introducing that nutriment, which, as the body becomes stronger, it must prepare for itself from the grosser aliments.

The intention of what has been said is to encourage, as much as possible, the continuation of this diet a little longer ; and, indeed, some of the finest children I ever saw have been chiefly confined to a food like this, for the first five or six years. But although I strongly recommend it, and am conscious that children, unacquainted with the indulgence of variety, would be perfectly satisfied without animal food ; yet I am persuaded that the culpable fondness of

most parents will initiate them, too early, into the luxuries of a plentiful table.

It is true, we made an observation that Nature never intended flesh for our food until we had teeth to eat it. But it by no means follows, as soon as we have our teeth, that with an unbounded freedom we are to devour animal food. Remember likewise, ye too indulgent parents, it has been before observed, that every alteration in our manner of living should be brought about step by step, hasty transitions being always dangerous : and let this teach us to be cautious in our manner of admitting flesh into the meals of children.

After what has been advanced, and after having given you my opinion that it is yet time enough to suffer children to eat flesh, I now leave this very important point to the discretion of parents : however, permit me to recommend, that when flesh is first introduced into their food, at whatever time it may be, this part of their

diet should be allowed them but sparingly ; and a regard also should be paid to its quality.

The flesh of barn-door fowls, beef, mutton, and full-grown animals in general, is the best. Crammed poultry, calves, and house-fed lambs, kept up to fatten, are improper, because their juices yield by far less nourishment.

Hence, beef tea, and mutton broth are preferable to those made from lamb or veal. The flesh also of such young fattened animals does not pass off weak stomachs so easily as the other.

High-seasoned gravies, and soups, made dishes, and salted meats, are ever to be avoided ; though salt with their meats may be allowed, for the reasons before given.

Although it is not meant to confine them at this age so strictly to bread, I am by no means for permitting too free a use of ve-

getables ; being convinced that some complaints of the bowels, in children more advanced in life, proceed from this error, and particularly worms : since, if the eggs of these insects are not taken in, together with these productions of the garden, on which they harbour and feed ; yet this food, at least, affords a considerable quantity of slime, which stagnating in the bowels, serves as an habitation for these pernicious little animals. This is my reason for allowing a little wine, now and then, to be given to children, and I am persuaded that I have seen its good effect. Care should be taken in the choice of vegetables ; those of the mealy kind, that approach the nearest to bread, are to be preferred, such as potatoes, rice, &c. Turnips are also good. Lettices, and some few others, may, in moderation, be given to them, which your own prudence must point out.

The kitchen preparations of milk, such as custards, blamange, white-pots, &c. are

exceedingly proper; and in this kind of food a greater variation may be indulged with less harm, being, for the most part, equally good and innocent. Salop mixed with milk, as mentioned in the last letter, may be granted as often as you please; and let it be remembered that it is the best way of giving that nutritious vegetable to children and invalids.* Eggs are good, and if the yolks be beaten up with warm milk, without boiling, they afford the best nourishment; yet, however they are dressed, never suffer children to eat them if the yolks be hard. Puddings in general are likewise good, but the most simple are best. Tarts and fruit-pies may be allowed in moderation.

Shell-fish, and indeed most other kinds, may, now and then, be given; but the firmest are to be preferred. These are the most prudent directions that occur to my memory; but, after all, those are wisest

* See Family Physician, p. 26.

who do not pamper young children with too great a variety.

I shall not trouble you with the curative part of diseases incident to children, that being altogether the concern of the physician; though it would give me a real pleasure to see such complaints treated of, in a masterly manner, by some accurate observer of Nature. This present system of nursing is intended only to manage children so as to prevent illness; and it has cost me no small pains to separate the two provinces, which I hope is effected to the satisfaction of my readers.

As to rhubarb, Gascoign's powder, magnesia, &c. every mother's observations in some measure direct a proper use of them;* but when disorders do not give way to such simple methods, there is no time to be lost. I beg leave therefore to caution parents,

* Those parents who are at a loss upon these points may consult the Family Physician—for Rhubarb, see p. 25.—Gascoign's Powder, p. 15.—Magnesia, p. 19.

who can obtain the advice of an experienced practitioner, not to depend upon their own judgments so far, as to suffer a continuance of complaints until they exceed the power of relief. Delays are always dangerous, with respect to disease, even in grown persons; but they are much more so in children, because they have not equal strength, and consequently sooner sink under bodily infirmities.

LETTER XII.

THE NECESSITY OF CULTIVATING
THE DISPOSITIONS OF CHILDREN,
TO RENDER THEM AMIABLE
AND VIRTUOUS.

第 八 章 學 習 法

CHAPTER VIII. STUDYING METHODS.
THEORY OF STUDYING METHODS.
THEORY OF STUDYING METHODS.
THEORY OF STUDYING METHODS.

L E T T E R X I I .

The necessity of cultivating the dispositions of children, to render them amiable and virtuous.

C O N F E S S , ye worthy parents who know the height of earthly bliss, what temptations in life could prevail upon you, after two or three years of age, to part from the dear dear offsprings of your mutual loves? Ye tender mothers, speak! I generously applaud an affection thus fondly riveted in the female breast, and answer for you, ladies, that nothing upon earth could prove equivalent to such a loss. Ten thousand soft enchantments bind them to your very souls.

This is the time in which their little fond endearments begin to operate, their every action is wonderfully engaging, and their pretty lisping tongues are one universal harmony. How exquisite is the delight to view their expanding minds—now catching

found, that quickly rises into sense, beaming a happy prospect of future understanding! Here the volume of man begins—even at this time the fertile genius glows. How transporting is their sweet sensibility!

O! powerful Nature, how unspeakably strong are thy ties! What heart, unless strangely perverted, can resist thy impulse? Hence arises the unspeakable difference of a laudable and virtuous passion, compared with an unchaste and vicious life. My God! that men should waste their health and fortunes in the stews with harlots, rioting in obscene and brutal pleasures, where the rational being is sunk even below pity!

Such conduct in the cooler hours of thought, if ever they reflect, must cause nothing but anguish and remorse; on the contrary, by cultivating a chaste and honourable love, such wretched libertines might become the joyful parents of little smiling families. What an alternative is

this! Be dumb, ye lawless rovers; it is an enjoyment beyond your comprehension, for virtuous minds alone can relish it.

What numbers of debauchees, in different climes and ages, worn out by guilty intemperance, mournfully lament their cursed fate, in not being blest with an heir to succeed to their half-ruined fortunes? Considerate Providence! thus to disappoint them — for what but impurity and disease could they give birth to? Happy, thrice happy decree of Nature, that virtue alone can claim a smiling and a healthful progeny!

This is a theme worthy of an abler pen. How often has prattling innocence disarmed the rugged fierceness of a brutish nature, and melted down the rage of passion into more than female softness? How often, I say, by these means, is the man of wrath insensibly dissolved into tenderness and

love? I must tear myself away from the digression; should I indulge my zealous inclination, a volume of panegyric would fall short of the subject.

The human mind in its infant opening has been justly compared to a blank sheet of paper, susceptible of every impression. Whence, it may be supposed, children receive their prejudices and inclinations from the dispositions of those persons to whose care they are entrusted, in like manner as these letters convey the sentiments of the author.

That any children are born with vicious inclinations, I would not willingly believe. When I hear parents exclaiming against the bad dispositions of their own children, I cannot help oftentimes secretly condemning the parents themselves for introducing such vices into their habits. Instinct, even in brutes, produces a tenderness for their young — a harmless society amongst their neighbours — a passive fear towards their

enemies—and violence seldom is discovered but against those animals which Nature has appointed for their support. Can we then imagine that a worse than brutish fierceness should be naturally discernible in our infant state?—that spite, malice, anger, and revenge, such diabolical passions, should tyrannize before we are capable of self-defence? The very supposition seems to me an arraignment of Providence in the noblest part of the creation, and appears to be inconsistent with the justice of a benevolent Deity.

It therefore behoves every mother to be watchful of her own conduct, and perfectly satisfied of the dispositions of such servants as she entrusts with the care of her children at this susceptible time of life; when even the more affectionately these persons treat them, the worse consequences are to be apprehended, if their own tempers are not good: for as children are gratefully fond of those who use them kindly, they are by far the more likely to

imbibe the bad qualities of an indulgent attendant; and, on the contrary, to profit by good examples.

Objects that attract the eyes are the first delighting. The pleasures from hearing are the next. From sight and sound ideas take their gradual rise. Hence, a partial fondness is formed by children towards those whose province it is to attend upon them: and for this reason they are more fond of their nurses, who are constantly prattling to them, than of parents neglectful of their infancy.

The want of duty and affection in children towards their parents, so much to be censured, and so generally complained of, often proceeds from this early mismanagement. The indifference also of too many parents towards their children frequently owes its origin to depriving themselves of the enjoyments of their little ones at this engaging season of life. Even to an uninterested person, the expanding of an infant

mind is a delightful entertainment ; but to good parents, the pleasure and attachment must certainly prove exceedingly more agreeable and lasting. We must indeed pity those whom necessity deprives of this happy solace, but utterly condemn such whose inclinations drive their little nurslings from them. Unnatural and mistaken persons, who, if they are punished with undutiful children, suffer only in consequence of their own neglect!

Would you, my tender and considerate matrons, wish to see your children truly amiable? Be then ever careful of yourselves. Endeavour also as much as possible to prevent violent excess of passion in your husbands. This is a laudable task, and much more in the power of women than they generally imagine. Trust me, my fair ones, truly prudent and good wives, by bending a little to the rugged, head-strong, and boisterous dispositions of some husbands, may for the most part

civilize them ; and by their endearing and soothing manners, in spite of early vicious habits, compel them to a behaviour of tenderness and love. Thus, by the example of an engaging deportment on your part, you will soften their tempers, so as to render them good husbands, good fathers, good masters, and valuable members of society.

While, on the other hand, vindictive and peevish women not only forfeit this female importance, but too frequently estrange their husbands affections from them : and need I say that this want of harmony and sincere friendship, between man and wife, is a dangerous pattern for their children ?

From the strong force of example, it becomes in a manner natural to the children of such persons to give an unbridled loose to every impulse ; nay, their emulation is soon engaged to become equally tyrannical with their parents. On the contrary,

where no such precedents are before their eyes; where impassioned and youthful love keeps pace with sentimental friendship; where the polite and well-bred man shews a virtuous inclination towards his wife; and they both join in a proper regard for their children:—how much reason have we to expect that their young and tender minds will be impressed with virtue? Nay, I dare aver, that from this rectitude of behaviour, such parents will generally be rewarded with good and dutiful children.

With respect to the management of children, how shall we draw the line betwixt indulgence and severity? Although they are diametrically opposite to each other, it is scarcely possible to be done; nay, it cannot be determined so as to admit of absolute decision. Children necessarily require a different treatment, even from their natural disposition, as it is usually called. And a conduct indulgent to some, will prove the greatest severity to others.

Let it therefore be remembered that our plan is to subdue the first irregular emotions in the bud, so as to prevent them from rising into passions.

I would then, at all events, earnestly recommend temper and forbearance to those who have the government of their infant years. Kind treatment, good words, and a generous encouragement, to most dispositions, will prove equal to every thing that you require of them; and if they can be conquered by such laudable and gentle means, you not only carry the first points in the most eligible manner, but accustom them also to an obliging behaviour, and excite their emulation to endeavour to please.

Carefully therefore observe every emotion that is praise-worthy, and let a reward accompany it; for the encouragement of one virtuous impulse will have a much happier effect than the correction of an hundred faults.

Such are the impressions necessary to form a virtuous mind, and they will certainly grow up into their habits. On the contrary, where children's dispositions are untoward; if they be subdued by harsh words, threats, and chastisement, how are their tempers ruffled by such treatment?—and what is to be expected, but that they consider severity and violence as the only means for them to obtain any point over others, whom they may have a future occasion to contend with? What a wretched foundation of perpetual disquietude!

Where reproof is necessary, mortification is undoubtedly the best means of correction, and let an acknowledgment of the fault prove the means of reconciliation.

“ And next to *right* pray condescend

“ T’acknowledge doing *wrong*, my friend.”

This humbles them in their own opinions; it necessarily begets shame, and before a

disposition is hardened into vice, shame will always produce amendment.

Moreover, in this case there is no object for resentment, that great support of pride, consequently it initiates them to consider thoroughly their own conduct, and of course to dwell upon the cause for which they are thus humbled. What, therefore, can more thoroughly conduce to render children amiable as they grow up, than the accustoming of them to a retrospection of their own behaviour, and to an inward condemnation of their faults, of which their making a concession is sufficient proof ?

Even in the most trifling promise a parent can make to children, I most earnestly recommend that it be religiously adhered to, otherwise you teach them a shocking lesson of deceit.

For equivocation and falsity, their mortifications ought to be exceedingly severe ;

but in every point where you find it necessary to correct, be sure you make them truly sensible of their error : at the same time, in every misdemeanour, be thoroughly satisfied that it proceeds from a culpable emotion before you reprove it ; for it sometimes falls out, that wrong actions may proceed from laudable intentions.

How often in life does it happen, that exceptions are taken against a friend, who is at that very time actually meditating the angry person's advantage ; and yet, perhaps, appearances so blind him that he thinks of nothing but revenge, until an *eclaircissement* takes place, when he as passionately reproaches himself for his ingratitude ? The case is still harder with children ; for, when they are punished wrongfully, it is seldom that they have it in their power to clear themselves ; and further, they may, probably, suppose their own good emotions to be the guilty cause, and thereby endeavour to suppress a rising virtue.

Indulgence over much is liable to produce effects equally bad, as extreme severity ; for as the latter inures them to every act of violence, so the former encourages the breach of every civil duty that thwarts their selfish inclinations.

But the greatest misconduct of all arises from these two opposite ways of management being united together, in the widest extreme ; when one moment the little creature's bones are almost broken for a fault of which it is scarcely sensible, and the next moment it is fondly cherished to reconcile it to the mistaken parent ; and in return, not improbably, indulged in exercising its rage upon toys, in torturing birds, dogs, cats, and such-like domestic animals as infant tyranny can lord it over ; and permitted also at the window to sport with the lives of little buzzing insects, that fall a sacrifice to wanton cruelty.

The child who is fondly and foolishly indulged, promises only a melancholy pro-

spect; but where, on the other hand, as is too generally seen, an occasional severity inures it to cruelty, the disposition is inevitably ruined. The consequences of such severity and such indulgence fill the mind with every disagreeable apprehension: and indeed, what can they produce but inordinate desires, brutish rage, and violence?

Those parents who are happy enough to subdue their own choler, and thereby set their children proper examples, will have very little cause for complaint against them. On the contrary, such as are perpetually quarrelling with each other, with their children, servants, and every body around them, cannot expect much peace and comfort from their rising families. But if they will take this friendly advice, to correct their own errors only once, for every hundredth time they chastise others, it will probably bring about some amendment in themselves; and the force of their example must surely produce the best effect upon their household.

We have now conducted children through the different stages of helpless infancy, and gradually introduced them, though as yet but junior characters, upon the grand theatre of life; where the happy effects of such careful regulations are generally to be distinguished. As to literary improvements, they properly come under another jurisdiction, and therefore claim your future consideration. Nevertheless, a condescending obligingness, a sweet affability, an unassuming sensibility, and a modest deportment, ever denote the proper education of a female mind. In like manner, prudence, abstemiousness, and virtuous dispositions in men, most frequently proceed from the good impressions of childhood. Severe stripes, and harsh usage, add fuel to a turbulent and revengeful spirit, and too frequently render a sullen boy malicious. On the other hand, the indulged and spoiled child commonly turns out an abandoned libertine.

Thus, my fair ones, you may easily discover how much society is interested in your motherly conduct, at this early time; “for as the twig is bent, the tree will grow;” and the seeds of iniquity, in those dispositions where virtue is not planted, unavoidably, as it were, take root, and spring up without much cultivation.

Every notorious vice shews an utter contempt for the moral duties of life, and the man whose character is infamous, seems but little to regard the opinion of others: therefore the good fame and chastity of women become his ridicule and sport. Such men are continually assailing their virtue, and aiming at their seduction. Of consequence, the darling, who has never been curbed in the early impulses of erroneous inclinations, will prove to be very little capable of subduing the tempestuous passions of youth; which will not only hurry him on to his own ruin, but also too generally occasion the disgrace, infamy, and destruction of many unfortunate young women.

Thus it appears, how greatly the happiness and prosperity of the fair sex are affected by the sensual misconduct of ours ; inasmuch that, in the present instance, women as well as men must fall degraded.

LETTER XIII.

OF MILK—ITS PROPERTIES
EXAMINED.

L E T T E R XIII.

Of milk—Its properties examined—the different kinds of milk compared with each other—and their particular virtues explained.

MILK has been recommended, in several letters, as the proper food for infants; and in the fourteenth and fifteenth, it is again spoken of, as being equally necessary for invalids, and aged persons. It shall therefore be the business of this letter to examine so far into the qualities of milk, and into the milk of different animals, as may enable us to determine what kind of milk is upon different occasions to be preferred; which will take in every thing, not elsewhere observed, upon this subject.

Milk was before remarked to be a kind of white blood, prepared by the mother for the support of her young; so far we may speak of it in general terms.

In different animals therefore it is reasonable to suppose, and fact confirms our supposition, that the qualities of milk are also different; hence, by first examining into its general properties, and, from those principles, setting forth the peculiar variations in the milk of different animals, we shall arrive at the desired conclusion.

In milk, by stepping into the dairy, we may discern three principal component parts. After it has remained some time in an undisturbed state, the cream floats upon the surface; it is the least in quantity, though most nourishing, of an oily balsamic substance, and inflammable in its nature, as the butter which is made from it plainly demonstrates.

A lady, before whom I once made some experiments, asked me why the cream floated upon the surface; for being, continued she, the thickest part, ought it not rather to sink to the bottom? I told her it was the thickest part, to be sure, but at the same

time it was also the lightest; specifically so, as oil is lighter than water, and therefore rises to the top.

The cream being taken off, the remaining milk appears bluish, and thinner than before; and when thus robbed of its thick creamy part, it consequently is not so smooth to the palate.

On the addition of runnet, or indeed any acid, a separation of the two remaining parts soon takes place, and we discover the curd. This being the heaviest, when separated from the whey, falls to the bottom. It is the least valuable part of the milk, glutinous in its nature, and composed of the most earthy particles, being also of an astringent quality.

The third and only remaining part, being the whey of the milk, is the largest in quantity, of a diluting and cleansing property.

Let us now by this standard compare the different kinds of milk mostly in use with us, and apply them to the purposes for which they seem best calculated.

The human milk, when drawn from the breast, has exactly the same bluish appearance as cows milk when the cream is taken off. It affords very little cream, and but a small quantity of curd, therefore the whey constitutes the chief part; but the more healthy the woman is, and particularly if between the age of twenty and thirty, the more her milk abounds with rich creamy balsam, and the more it also contains of the curd or earthy particles; probably from her constitution being, at this time, in full vigour, and the digestive powers therefore more perfect.

These observations will point out the best substitute where the breast is denied, and will likewise direct those who prefer wet-nursing in the choice of the properest person; for there is, in my opinion, an equal

objection against the milk of a very young girl, as against that of a woman almost past child-bearing. The cleansing quality, before taken notice of, in a breast of new milk, will also, together with reason and experience, shew the propriety of recommending those women who have not been long delivered.

Asses milk is generally allowed to be the nearest to the human, and according to the above experiments we find it so, abounding mostly with whey, and having little of the cream or curd in it. Hence, after a severe fit of illness, where the body is much emaciated, and the stomach weak, or where the blood is loaded with sharp acrid humours, the cleansing quality of asses milk deserves a preference to that of any other animal which is used for this purpose. In consumptive cases, or where there is a slow habitual fever, it is justly to be preferred, until such time as the constitution may have gained a little

strength, when the more nourishing ought to supply its place.

Mares milk is esteem'd to be much the same as asses, but this indeed is in very little use.

Cows milk comes next under consideration. This appears to be the richest and most nourishing of any of the brutes milk here mentioned. It abounds with a great deal of cream; for, after standing twelve hours, and being skimmed, it appears equal to any other milk. It contains also a large quantity of curd; and, after all, even the whey is by far more nutritious than any other.

We observed that asses milk, in the experiments, mostly resembles the human. Why then not prefer that to cows milk for the food of children? I do not totally deny the use of this milk for that purpose; but in our part of the country it is very expensive, and cannot be obtained

in any large quantity, for which reason it would be impracticable to bring it into general use.

There is likewise another reason which inclines me to give a preference to cows milk; for, notwithstanding the similarity of human milk to that of asses, the first may well be supposed most strengthening, since women usually feed on animal as well as vegetable diet, while the brutes we speak of are confined intirely to vegetables. Whence, if we substitute asses milk, we shall fall short of the nourishment Nature designed for us; and therefore for a young child, who requires a heartening diet, the milk of cows, in my opinion, is preferable, as the richness of it is, in some measure, adequate to the supposed difference in the qualities of human milk, and that of other animals.

The milk of sheep and goats consists mostly of the curd, or earthy particles: hence, where the blood-vessels are injured

by acrid humours, and frequent bleedings happen from this cause; or where children are subject to the rickets, from a weakness of the bones, that milk which abounds mostly with the curd, or cheesy part, seems best calculated to answer the intention; its earthy, mucilaginous, and astringent property having the greatest tendency to heal such ruptured vessels, and to give a firmness to the bones: but as these milks possess less of the cleansing power, it will, in most cases, particularly in bleedings, be proper to use the more attenuating kind first.

We have now examined the different milks familiar to us, and from their different properties, pointed out the end each sort seems best calculated to answer; whence every person will quickly be determined which to give the preference to in particular complaints.

When any one first begins to eat milk, especially if a free liver, it may probably

purge a little, but such inconveniencies will most commonly be removed by accustoming the constitution to the use of it, and boiling the milk will in a great measure prevent this effect. I have always remarked that those who, by reason of a pampered appetite, complain of milk and vegetables being windy, and not agreeing with them, are the very persons who most require such a diet; for it is the debauched state of the stomach and bowels that occasions their uneasiness, which this regimen seems the most likely to correct.

I have recommended a little salt to be mixed with milk before it is given to children, if they are apt to throw it up curdled; and shall mention the experiment which induced me to give that advice, since it is equally worthy the attention of grown persons, some of whom make this an objection to their eating milk, as I am inclined to believe such

precaution will render it agreeable to most constitutions.

I put two ounces of milk, warm as it came from the cow, into a tea-cup, with a little common salt. I put the same quantity, of the like warmth, into another tea-cup, without salt. Then dropping a very little distilled vinegar into each, a hard curd presently appeared in that milk which had no salt in it, while the other with the salt was scarcely altered.

I tried the same experiment again with a large tea spoonful of runnet, and observed the milk which had the salt in it to continue in its fluid state, while the other grew thick and turbid, and almost instantly separated into curds and whey. This last experiment answered the best, and is much more to our purpose than the former. From these hints it seems reasonable to conclude, that salt taken with milk might equally prevent the too hasty

curdling of it, where there is a great acidity in the stomach; in which case, the curdled milk, having too quickly assumed a solidity, becomes troublesome; and because it is not as yet designed to pass into the bowels for the office of nourishment, a part of this intolerable load is generally discharged by vomiting. Moreover, the stimulating quality of salt will greatly assist a weak digestion, and thereby facilitate the passage of the milk from the stomach into the bowels; and from experience, in recommending it to children who used to throw up their milk in a curdled state, I am convinced of its utility.

In all cases where infirmities or age require a prudent regimen, I have directed a similar care to that of dieting children. Milk therefore comprehends a very material part of such food, and I am fully persuaded that if it were more universally used, the world in general would be greatly benefited. I do not, however, mean to be understood that I debar those from a reason-

able quantity of animal food, who are capable of digesting it. But such as are emaciated by illness, or have the misfortune to labour under gouty complaints; such also as are consumptively inclined, or those who have crazy, infirm constitutions, and are subject to an habitual feverish disposition, will do right to eat flesh only once in the day, and, for the rest of their nourishment, to live almost, if not altogether, upon milk.

L E T T E R X I V .

THE SICK CHAMBER.

LETTER XIV.

*The sick chamber—with directions also for
invalids.*

WE are now, my dear ladies, entering into the sick chamber, in which, as well as in the nursery, many amiable characters may be drawn. Here, the conjugal affection of a wife is laudably displayed—the tender love of a mother fondly exerts itself—the gratitude and duty of a daughter are conspicuous—the good sister also endears herself to a worthy brother—and female friendship wears a thousand additional charms!

Let us picture a truly tender and good wife, in this exalted character! Let us suppose that she has her deserved recompence, by restoring to her chaste and longing arms the distinguished choice of her youthful love, ennobled by a generous sympathy of virtuous inclinations!

Let us imagine this happy man perfectly recovered from a dangerous and painful illness; to which recovery her unwearied attendance proved greatly instrumental: his mind, likewise, impressed with every thought a consciousness of such an obligation can inspire! Behold the husband admiring her transcendent excellency, while the honest tear, perchance, trickling down his cheek, betrays the big emotion of a grateful heart. “She, on her part, with looks of cordial love, awhile in silent rapture glows —then on bended knees adores her Maker” —returns most fervid thanks, for that her prayer of sorrow has been heard, that He has graciously restored the husband and the father! How great must be their reciprocal felicity!

I shall now proceed to those instructions which are necessary for the proper execution of this friendly office. There is a certain impertinence, frequently proceeding from laudable motives, which, nevertheless, is totally culpable: I mean the desire of our

acquaintance to visit a sick chamber. It is oftentimes, I acknowledge, the effect of tendernefs ill-placed, and a real concern imprudently expressed. In general, those visits should not be permitted. I every day experience the ill effects of them. When indeed a patient is upon the recovery, and capable of sitting up three or four hours at a time, the company of a friend, who knows how far to engage, with propriety, in conversation, is a sweetly refreshing solace : but locks, bolts, or bars, cannot be too strong to keep prating gossips, at all times, out of a sick chamber.

During a fever, it is a load sufficient for any patient to bear the disease. Quietude on his part, and silence on the part of those about him, ought universally to be imposed. It is not a time for the mind to be engaged either in the pursuit of business or pleasure.

This leads me to a consideration of the utmost importance ; and as I am not speak-

ing as a physician, but as a friend, it comes properly within that province, and I hope it will be seriously attended to by every reader. If it is now prejudicial for any one to think, even of the common concerns of life, how much more injurious must it prove, to have the mind engaged in that great work of settling, for ever, our worldly affairs?

Would you, my rational friends, wish to be freed from an intolerable burden, never postpone this important business until you are upon a bed of sickness. Not to say how incapable the judgment at such a time will often prove, perhaps to the detriment of some deserving friend, or not unlikely to the confusion of a whole family, the very mention of it from any one about us, or the conscious necessity in ourselves, must exceedingly hurry and depress the spirits, when tranquillity and support are essentially necessary. For what can such an idea convey but death?—A last will and testament is one of the most solemn

acts of life, and ought never to be postponed till the agonizing moments of death.

The chamber, proper for a patient, is of no small moment. There ought to be a free circulation of air, whether it be in the summer or winter. I never would have any person confined to a room without a chimney ; it is equally necessary in the warmer season for the purpose of discharging the offensive vapours of disease, as it is in cold weather, by means of a little fire, to bring the air to a due temperament, which also contributes to remove the like offence.

To you, my female friends, this concern of nursing belongs. It is an important and oftentimes a fatiguing task. I would willingly engage you in it upon principle, and therefore shall endeavour to shew that man and woman were born for each other's support and comfort. Their respective dependence upon each other

is, undoubtedly, the wise ordination of Omniscience.

I cannot speak of this mutual obligation without being mindful of the beautiful passage in our immortal Milton's *Paradise Lost*, book the fourth, where Eve gives Adam an account of herself; and I shall introduce the description at length, as a quotation from this author can never be deemed impertinent. Let us attend to the mother of mankind!—

To whom thus Eve reply'd. O thou! for whom
And from whom I was form'd; flesh of thy flesh;
And without whom am to no end; my guide,
And head! what thou hast said is just and right.
For we to him indeed all praises owe,
And daily thanks; I chiefly, who enjoy
So far the happier lot, enjoying thee
Præ-eminent by so much odds; while thou
Like comfort to thyself can'st no where find.
That day I oft remember, when from sleep
I first awak'd, and found myself repos'd
Under a shade, on flowers; much wond'ring where,
And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.
Not distant far from thence, a murmuring sound
Of waters issued from a cave, and spread

Into a liquid plain, then stood unmov'd,
Pure as th' expanse of heav'n : I thither went,
With inexperience'd thought, and laid me down
On the green bank, to look into the clear
Smooth lake, that to me seem'd another sky.
As I bent down to look, just opposite
A shape within the watry gleam appear'd,
Bending to look on me ; I started back,
It started back ; but pleas'd I soon return'd ;
Pleas'd it return'd as soon, with answering looks
Of sympathy, and love : there I had fix'd
Mine eyes till now, and pin'd with vain desire,
Had not a voice thus warn'd me, " What thou see'st,
" What there thou see'st, fair creature, is thyself ;
" With thee it came and goes : but, follow me,
" And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
" Thy coming, and thy soft embraces ; he
" Whose image thou art : him thou shalt enjoy
" Inseparably thine, to him shalt bear
" Multitudes like thyself, and thence be call'd
" Mother of human race." What could I do,
But follow strait, invisibly thus led,
Till I espy'd thee ? fair indeed, and tall,
Under a plantan ; yet, methought, less fair,
Less winning soft, less amiably mild,
Than that smooth watry image : back I turn'd ;
Thou following cry'dst aloud, Return, fair Eve,
Whom fly'st thou ? whom thou fly'st, of him thou art,
His flesh, his bone ; to give thee being I lent
Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,
Substantial life, to have thee by my side
Henceforth an individual solace dear :

Part of my soul, I seek thee; and thee claim,
My other half! — With that, thy gentle hand
Seiz'd mine; I yielded; and from that time see
How beauty is excell'd by manly grace,
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.

To illustrate my argument of our mutual dependence, I must beg leave to indulge myself, and hope likewise to entertain my reader, with another quotation from the same author. Adam, desirous of retaining the angel Raphael, relates to him what he remembers since his own creation, and amongst other things, that which is to our purpose, his first meeting and nuptials with Eve. After recounting his dream, wherein he was informed of her creation, he proceeds: —

I wak'd

To find her, or for ever to deplore
Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure.
When out of hope, behold her! not far off;
Such as I saw her in my dream, adorn'd
With what all earth or heav'n could bestow
'To make her amiable; on she came,
Led by her heav'nly Maker (though unseen)
And guided by his voice; nor uninform'd
Of nuptial sanctity, and marriage rites:

Grace was in all her steps, heav'n in her eye,
In every gesture dignity, and love!
I over-joy'd could not forbear aloud.---

This turn hath made amends! Thou hast fulfill'd
Thy words, Creator bounteous, and benign!
Giver of all things fair! but fairest this
Of all thy gifts! nor enviest. I now see
Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself
Before me: woman is her name; of man
Extracted: for this cause he shall forego
Father and mother, and to his wife adhere;
And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.

She heard me thus; and though divinely brought,
Yet innocence, and virgin modesty,
Her virtue, and the conscience of her worth,
That would be woo'd, and not unsought be won;
Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retir'd,
The more desirable: or, to say all,
Nature herself (though pure of sinful thought)
Wrought in her so, that seeing me, she turn'd;
I follow'd her; she what was honour knew,
And, with obsequious majesty, approv'd
My pleaded reason.----To the nuptial bow'r
I led her, blushing like the morn: all heav'n,
And happy constellations, on that hour
Shed their se'e'test influence: the earth
Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill:
Joyous the birds; fresh gales, and gentle airs
Whisper'd it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung rose, flung odors from the spicy shrubs,

Disporting! till the amorous bird of night
Sung spousal, and bid haste the ev'ning star
On his hill-top, to light the bridal lamp.

Thus I have told thee all my state, and brought
My story to the sum of earthly bliss,
Which I enjoy: and must confess to find
In all things else delight indeed; but such
As, us'd or not, works in the mind no change,
Nor vehement desire; the delicacies
I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, and flow'rs,
Walks, and the melody of birds: but here
Far otherwise! transported I behold,
Transported touch: here passion first I felt,
Commotion strange! in all enjoyments else
Superior and unmov'd: here only weak,
Against the charm of beauty's pow'rful glance.
Or Nature fail'd in me, and left some part
Not proof enough such object to sustain:
Or, from my side subduing, took perhaps
More than enough: at least, on her bestow'd
Too much of ornament: in outward shew,
Elaborate; of inward, less exact.
For well I understand, in the prime end
Of Nature, her th' inferior; in the mind,
And inward faculties; which most excel:
In outward also her resembling less
His image who made both; and less expressing
The character of that dominion giv'n
O'er other creatures. Yet, when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems,
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own; that what she wills to do, or say,

Seems wisest, virtuouſest, diſcretest, beſt :
All higher knowledge in her preſence falls
Degraded ; wiſdom in diſcourſe with her
Loſes diſcountenanc'd, and like folly ſhews :
Authority and reaſon on her wait,
As one intended firſt, not after made
Occaſionally : and (to conſummate all)
Greatneſs of mind, and nobleneſs, their ſeat
Build in her lovelieſt, and create an awe
About her, as a guard angelic plac'd.

How exquiſitely charming are theſe deſcriptions ! what valuable portraits of the firſt human pair ! The lines elegantly ſtrong ! The colourings beautifully rich ! Then again the amazingly ſoft and delicate touches of this great maſter of the human feelings, where-ever we caſt our eyes, enchantingly appear !

What can more fully ſhew our mutual dependence !—ſo amiably engaging to each other, our firſt parents, in this poem, are deſcribed, that the labour of either, whereby the other was benefited, muſt prove a real pleaſure. What an example for the encouragement of matrimony !—O that we could more generally diſplay the cha-

rafter of Adam! Then you, my fair ones, would strive more ardently, in gentleness and love, to imitate this first of women.

If man would endeavour to curb unlawful inclinations, cherishing and comforting the wife of his bosom; if he would fondly regard her charms and virtues; what emulation must such a conduct excite in every female breast—to give honour and dignity to her husband? Let men but begin the reformation, and I will be accountable for the right behaviour of the generality of your sex.

Nevertheless, the culpableness of man will not excuse the folly of woman; and this piece of advice, from a real friend, the ladies will do well to observe.

I know my fair pupils will tell me, that although a husband may have follies and vices, yet, if he is but a sensible man, they can overlook them, and chearfully submit to their lord and master—but who, say they, can be governed by a fool?

When once a woman has drawn her lot, it is not only her duty, but the height of policy, to make the best of it. Let her choice prove ever so disagreeable, or supposing that she was led into such a marriage by the cruel compulsion of her friends, still honour and obedience are required on her part. By giving importance to an husband, (even those husbands we are now speaking of, for others will command it) a wife merits, and generally obtains, praise and adoration, not only from him, but from the whole world.

On the contrary, the mistaken she, who in company degrades, and, upon every occasion, tauntingly reproaches her husband, thus making him, poor man, the contemptible butt to level her triumphant shafts at; notwithstanding she imagines her own wit and superior talents are happily displayed, to the entertainment and admiration of her friends; believe me, ladies, by those very friends she must ever be condemned; and let her merits, in other

respects, be ever so great, this culpable part of her behaviour they most assuredly despise.

But to return from our present wandering, which I intentionally followed as an encouragement to virtue, a consistency of character, and mutual love; being convinced that these qualifications will make even a constant attendance in a sick chamber not altogether unpleasing. Now then let us pursue our further care, where female tenderness can assuage the severest bodily pains, and render the greatest misfortunes of life, at least, supportable.

In every disorder, physic and good nursing ought to go hand in hand; and I am the more desirous of giving my opinion with respect to *good nursing*, as I mean to oppose it to *poor and bad nursing*, which has been too much the unlucky and mistaken practice of the sick chamber: for under the vague idea of inflammation, and inflammatory diseases, even bread and water have been sometimes accounted too great

a support for the patient. But, with pleasure, we now see physicians act upon more rational principles; and I would wish to convince you, ladies, whose province it is, of the propriety of supporting patients under every disease.

The sick chamber is our subject; but it is also to be understood, that the precautions here laid down will prove equally necessary, where invalids are permitted to attend to the common affairs of life; for, without a prudent regulation in our method of living, few constitutional or long-existing ails can be removed, or even rendered in any degree light, and easily to be borne; but I am clearly convinced, that it is very possible for many infirm persons to pass comfortably through a tolerable length of life, and, at last, to pay an easy debt to nature. *

* It would be swelling this letter to a very great bulk, was I to enter into a particular account of the diet proper for invalids. The reader, who is under the necessity of observing such a prudent restraint, is therefore referred to

The observations, therefore, upon children and aged persons are equally applicable to those, who, by ungoverned passions and intemperance, have ruined their health; for in either of these cases, where the bodily powers are enervated, and the digestion weakened, a proper, light, and nourishing diet is as necessary to restore health, as it is to support the young, and preserve the aged.

Every disease is to be considered as a deviation from health; and a fever is the means made use of by Nature to free the body from something that is noxious. Ought we, therefore, to counter-act her in this her own great work? Ought we not rather cautiously and prudently, like a valuable handmaid, to tend upon her movements, and generously support her in the

my observations upon diet in the Family Physician; some hints of this kind are there thrown out, which he may probably consider as not altogether unworthy of his attention.

design she aims at? Surely this appears to every one reasonable.

However, where there is a fever, or great weakness of the body, or where the body itself is emaciated, an alteration from the common manner of living is certainly necessary. To these points, therefore, I shall confine my advice, as other considerations come under a medical direction.

Few persons are constrained to keep their chambers, who are not troubled with great loss of strength, or feverish complaints; either as the first cause, or as symptoms accompanying other diseases. Supposing then these circumstances, the constitution being thus reduced, or Nature labouring to throw off a disease, the body certainly requires a nourishment of the most simple kind; by simple I mean easy of digestion, but let it at the same time be comfortable. The stomach and bowels must, of necessity, be equally affected with the other parts of

the body, and consequently unable to perform their offices upon the common supports of life.

Animal food, therefore, is particularly to be forbidden; and I am sorry to be obliged to blame the fondness of parents, and those who assist in sick chambers, for too frequently indulging patients thus unwarrantably. Give me leave to observe, if flesh be permitted during the existence of a fever, or when the body, by illness, is exceedingly weakened and emaciated, from the incapacity of the digestive faculties, the nourishment produced must be imperfect, crude, offensive; and consequently, instead of a support, must add an additional weight to the disease.

But, at the same time, let it be remembered, that as a support is necessary, good broths, wine whey, jellies, panado, a beverage of wine and water, &c. are to be discretionally permitted; and indeed the inclination of the sick person will gene-

rally determine the propriety of these things; for where they are hurtful, an universal loathing of them commonly takes place.

These, and such like sippings, being easy of digestion, are not only the properest for a diseased state of the stomach and bowels, but they also supply the body with a necessary nourishment to uphold its strength under the disorder. It is a point at present acknowledged by all good physicians. It is, in my opinion, a circumstance minutely to be dwelt upon; for woeful experience has often convinced me, that the rashness of an obstinate nurse, in one unlucky hour, has counteracted the operations of a well-regulated, and otherwise successful, regimen.

Although I would debar patients from animal food, where there is a feverish complaint, nevertheless I do most earnestly recommend a generous, but discretionary, support of easily digested and comfortable

liquid nourishment, in every fever. I mean, that barley - water, mint and baum tea, with such like drinks, will not sufficiently support the strength of a patient under any kind of fever, even for a few days, and much less for as many weeks. As to the distinctions of inflammatory, nervous, and putrid, it is not my business to enter upon them here; but supposing the fever to be inflammatory, the patient is, or ought to be, confined to bed, and a breathing sweat encouraged. Will not then an already almost digested and innocent liquid nourishment answer the physician's aim, at the same time that it supports the patient? Experience has convinced me of its utility. I cannot help, therefore, strongly recommending it, for I am too apprehensive that many lives are daily lost for want of this necessary support.

I am labouring to prevent that mistaken care, which is commonly called starving a disease, and to set aside the dreadful appre-

hension that a little innocent nourishment, given to a person in a fever, is still adding fuel to the fire. By these errors the ablest assistance is oftentimes baffled, to the cost of the patient, and, not unlikely, to the disgrace of a worthy practitioner. Be assured, that it is more eligible to endeavour to support, and build up again, a shaken, diseased, and tottering frame, than to attempt to pull it down. Never let this be done but by the express command of wisdom and experience, for it is a serious affair at all times to deprive a tenement of its foundation and strength. It is much to be wished, as it surely must prove a general advantage, that physicians would more particularly direct the regimen of diet in sick chambers.

The punctuality of nurses, and those who attend upon the sick, in the administering of medicines, is of no small import. It is a cruel reflection upon the honest part of the profession, that practitioners consult the number of their fees, or the length of their

bills, more than the health of their patients. Such iniquity is but very seldom, I hope, if ever practised ; and as few persons employ any but those of whom they entertain a good opinion, let me warn you, as a friend, not to indulge a suspicion which betrays a mean soul, and most probably will, at some time or other, produce fatal consequences to yourselves. Great relief, nay, oftentimes, perfect health, is assuredly to be obtained by the help of medicine. Great evil, nay, too frequently, certain death, ensues from a jealous contempt, or wanton neglect of this salutary aid.

I must speak of another mistake, with regard to the management of linen. A patient cannot be hurt by changing wet, filthy, and offensive linen, for that which is clean, dry, and comfortable, provided this be done with proper care, not to give cold during the time of shifting the cloaths. Linen which is perfectly dry and clean is, at all times, to be preferred to that which has been used, for the latter may have absorbed of-

fenſive vapours, of which the former muſt be intirely free. Againſt this obſervation, I am convinced, there are great prejudices ; nevertheless thoſe who employ their reaſon but for a moment, will ſee the propriety of the preſent caution.

A free ſucceſſion of air is eſſentially neceſſary, not only to carry off the offenſive vapours of diſeaſe, but alſo to the recovery of the patient ; nay, even to the preſervation of thoſe who attend upon the ſick. It is true that a fire is proper in cold weather, for reaſons before given, but at the ſame time the chamber ought to be no more than comfortably warm ; for where this degree of heat is exceeded, faint ſweats are likely to exhaust the patient's ſtrength, whereby he ſinks, perhaps, under a diſeaſe, through which, probably, he might otherwiſe have been ſupported.

Having now cautioned you againſt the moſt material errors which, at preſent, occur to my memory, I will beg leave to

observe what poor creatures men in general are, when necessity confines them to a sick chamber ! If we reflect upon this scene, ought we to complain of the spirits of women ? I scarcely ever find a man, in sickness, support himself so well as a woman does. Men are, for the most part, depressed in their spirits to the greatest degree when they are ill. Be it then with gratitude remembered, that in a sick chamber, the pleasing vivacity, and, let me add, the true philosophy, of a kind female friend, prove essentially necessary. A good nurse will, in a great measure, alleviate our bodily infirmities, by supporting our spirits in time of sickness.

A man by striking and superior abilities, industry, and good fortune, is sometimes lucky enough to raise himself, aggrandise his family, and bring to his wife conveniencies far beyond her expectations. But what are all these things, compared to the comfort, and tender support, which she in return can largely bestow upon him ; at a time too

when the infirmities of nature will not suffer such an exalted favourite of fortune to relish any one enjoyment of life? Ask this very darling, when he is stretched on the bed of sickness and rendered helpless by disease;—let us fancy him too almost expiring under excruciating agonies, and now put the question to him, Which is more eligible, fortune or health? He will assuredly answer, that one moment's ease is more desirable than all the splendid advantages he may have obtained.

In like manner, the truly affectionate and sympathizing concern, the delicate deportment, and careful attendance of a good wife, in these scenes of painful sufferance, more than over-balance every thing that is in the power of the most successful husband to bestow upon her; and it is a truth which truly generous minds will ever gratefully acknowledge.

A man under these circumstances, with some regard to his accustomed manner of

living, and the particular disease, is to be considered as a child ; and consequently ought to be submitted to female management. Your care, therefore, will of course direct you to seek the assistance of able and experienced physicians. May their skill conquer the disease, while you generously support his strength and spirits ; and thereby greatly contribute to restore again the invalid to a healthy and vigorous constitution !

LETTER XV.

OLD AGE—BY VIRTUE RENDERED
TRULY HONOURABLE.

LETTER XV.

Old age—by virtue rendered truly honourable.

*The steps by which we mounted into life,
shewn to be the easiest and best paths to de-
scend into the grave.*

SPRING, summer, and autumn, have their various and engaging charms; and there is something peculiarly pleasing in each transition; but stern winter can boast of nothing besides the fruits of the preceding seasons.

The life of man is often, with propriety, compared to the progressive year; and the only happiness that can be expected in old age, must arise from the reflections of a well-spent life; at which time, being likewise the winter of our days, every person may generally reap the fruits of a past virtuous conduct:—For, although the benumbed limbs deny the body their usual support, and the hoary head trembles on its withered

shoulders, there are valuable comforts yet in store for those who, like the industrious ant, have been wise enough to treasure them at the proper season.

Such a good man or woman, one would hope, has wherewithal to procure the indulgencies their years require, and a sufficiency to requite the attendance of a faithful servant. Join to these a further blessing that, perchance, kind heaven has bestowed, a dutiful and good daughter to support their infirmities, and by her affectionate tenderness, fully to repay them for the pains of her education, and that parental anxiety, which must necessarily have been sustained during her youth. Here, I say, the wisdom and tender indulgence of a kind parent is amply rewarded, by the fostering care of a truly virtuous and affectionate child. These are inestimable comforts; and such is the easy decline that Providence intended to old age—thus to close life with a not unhappy period.

Let us, my amiable friends, picture a worthy and aged man in his second infant state. Let us with composure attend him to the gates of death, there to deliver him up into the bosom of his Creator ! Let us indulge a rational sorrow, but at the same time support that calmness and serenity which denote a religiously informed mind. Let us consider this as a debt which we all must assuredly pay, and that it puts an everlasting period to the calamities of life ! Whence may be drawn this comfortable conclusion, that if to the uttermost of our power we have contributed to the great end for which we were created, our future state of existence must be happier than the present.

Come then, ye tender and sympathizing fair, let us approach the chamber of death ! Let us advance to the bed of this good parent, and behold his calm and resigned countenance ! Although we shall find it a solemn scene, yet there is nothing so ter-

rible in this sight as the world generally imagine. But draw the contrary character, that of a wicked man in his last moments ; and it must be shocking indeed.

As ripened and mellow fruit drops, untouched, from the tree to its mother earth ; so the good old man falls peaceably into the grave, and mingles again with the common dust from which he originally sprang.

It is the vicious alone that have reason to be terrified at the thoughts of death ; but we are describing the upright man, not unlikely taking a last and affectionate farewell of his lovely and dutiful daughters ; exhorting them to the practice of virtue, and recounting the rewards attendant upon it. The eldest, perhaps, in her willing arms supports the expiring fire, while the youngest administers some refreshing cordial to detain, for a moment, the fleeting spirit. Mean while the tranquil parent, peradventure, gently rebukes the falling tear, pro-

phetically foretelling that their last moments shall be peaceable like his—and blesses them with his dying lips.

For such characters, delineated more at large, and which are worthy of our admiration and reverence, I must refer my gentle readers, for the female one, to that great master of human feelings, Mr. Richardson, in his history of Sir Charles Grandison. How beautifully is honourable age exemplified in the character of Mrs. Shirley ! The account there given of the latter part of her life will assuredly delight and instruct every one. The death of lady Grandison, how inexpressibly interesting ! Although her temples were covered with untimely snow, yet, in the character of wife, parent, and christian, her exalted virtue had shone unrivalled ; and when the awful period approached, behold her departure, like the setting sun,—leaving husband, children, and a world of friends, to mourn the eternal absence of her cheering rays !

The whole work contains a noble system of morality, and is highly to be recommended to all young persons. These useful lessons will be still more instructive, when read in the company of those who are capable of making proper remarks. This being premised, virtuous emulation will ever be most excited in young minds from characters which appear real, because example always proves stronger than precept. Thus entertainment, and improvement, will go hand in hand.

For the other character, I mean that of a good old man, no one has excelled the ingenious and learned Dr. Armstrong, in his *Essay upon Health*. The whole poem, indeed, is written in a masterly stile, and conveys many useful instructions, truly worthy of perusal; but his description of honourable age is inimitable, and although very concise, nevertheless it contains a volume of panegyric. I shall beg that gentleman's leave to transcribe it.—

How to live happiest; how avoid the pains,
 The disappointments, and disgusts of those
 Who would in pleasure all their hours employ;
 The precepts here of a divine old man
 I could recite. Tho' old, he still retain'd
 His manly sense, and energy of mind.
 Virtuous and wise he was, but not severe;
 He still remember'd that he once was young;
 His easy presence check'd no decent joy.
 Him even the dissolute admir'd; for he
 A graceful looseness when he pleas'd put on,
 And laughing could instruct. Much had he read,
 Much more had seen; he studied from the life,
 And in th' original perus'd mankind.

Such characters render old age desirable,
 lovely, and truly honourable. The odium
 of peevish and morose vanishes, while our
 reverence and admiration stand alone en-
 gaged. Who would not wish to be that
 old man, whose calm tranquillity far sur-
 passes the transient and passionate enjoy-
 ments of youth? Happy children blest with
 such happy parents!

From this description I hope to interest
 the tender passions of my fair readers, so
 as to make them chearfully contribute to

the comforts of their aged parents, while they yet live. A dutiful daughter must ever make a good wife and tender mother; and to a prudent, discerning man, it is certainly one of the greatest recommendations in the choice of a companion for life.

On the other hand, a cruel and undutiful child is the most odious and unnatural monster upon earth; insomuch that the Chinese are said to punish such crimes with the greatest severity. It is recorded in their history, that if a son should be known to kill, or so much as to strike his father, not only the criminal, but his whole family, would be rooted out; their dwelling razed to the ground, and its foundation sown with salt; nay, *Le Compte* adds, that the inhabitants of the place where he lived would be put to the sword; as they conclude there must have been a total depravation of manners in that clan, or society of people, who could have bred up amongst them so horrid an offender.

How beautifully has our inimitable Shakespeare drawn the two contrasted characters, in his description of Lear and his three daughters ; where the two elder appear like Satan's evil angels, while Cordelia, the poor Cordelia, is an exalted example of filial tenderness and affection !

To your peculiar province, ye amiable fair, is this last great duty consigned ; to instruct you, therefore, in the proper execution of it, a few useful observations may not be unseasonably introduced.

In a former letter, we likened infancy to a tender plant ; where we taught the best method of rearing it, so as to make it flourish in the garden of the world. The summer having produced you, the fair fruit of this goodly tree ; and the autumn of your parent-stock having ripened your understanding ; it is but meet that such knowledge should direct you, at this frozen season, to cherish the decaying root from whence you sprang.

We have taken notice of the helpless state of childhood, before the body has acquired strength sufficient to prepare its own nourishment. We have shewn the time when instinct and reason direct us to provide for ourselves; and particularly observed, that animal food was never designed for our use until we had teeth given us to eat it.

Let us continue these speculations, and regard the natural growth of our bodies, together with the encreasing strength of our constitutions. Behold the child, whom you lately fondled in your arms, now contending with his play-fellows in boyish sports. Again, observe him who lately returned from school with his satchel in his hand, now panting foremost in the chace. And now see manhood stamped upon the downy cheek. Let us likewise remember the equally gradual declension. At length the sturdy son supports his feeble sire. For he who, in his youth, was swiftest in the race, is now scarcely able to uphold his

tottering limbs. The man of war, whose sturdy arm wielded the blood-thirsting sword of battle, is now bending under the weight of his own body. Behold, his sinews are dried up, and the purple current that bounded in his veins now heavily and scarcely creeps along. In every part alike the powers of this wonderful machine decay. The teeth, designed both for use and ornament, robbed of their beautiful enamel, become unfitly, and drop out of their sockets. The penetrating eye, that searched into the very abyss of thought, is altogether useless, or but dimly discerns the rays of light. Manly fortitude is now no more; and wisdom itself retires from the decayed mansion. — Such is the almost universal condition of old age, properly called our second childhood; and plain are the inferences to be drawn from hence.

If a light and easily digested nourishment was necessary before our bodies had

obtained their proper strength, surely a similar method of living is the most proper when they have lost it; and therefore—the steps by which we mounted into life, are the easiest and best paths to descend into the grave.

The digestive powers of age are equally enfeebled with the members of the body; and, undoubtedly, the same reason that forbid the use of flesh, before we had teeth, points out the necessity of gradually declining it as they decay. There are, indeed, some few persons toothless who are not far advanced in life; but such constitutions are generally feeble, and therefore the precautions are not unapplicable to them.

These arguments being rightly understood, there will be little occasion to enlarge upon this subject, as the directions for the management of children, from the time of weaning them, until they may be

entrusted to the care of themselves, comprehend every necessary instruction for the regimen of old age; and those persons act wisely who consider it as a second childhood.

I need not be more particular on this head, as few, I am persuaded, will suppose this period to commence with themselves, before it is necessary for them to conform to these rules.

Age, undoubtedly, requires indulgence, but at the same time indolence creeps on it imperceptibly. Those persons suffer least from pain, who rouse themselves to a state of activity; and there are exercises well adapted even to advanced life: an additional warmth of covering is at this time necessary, yet those act most prudently who do not accustom themselves to very warm cloaths, and very warm rooms, while they are capable of enduring the variations of their natural climate.

Nevertheless, one remark must not escape our observation ; I mean the happy effect of temperance through life : it not only prevents disease as we are upon our journey, but enables us to receive the intended benefit, and cordial support, of wine, and other comfortable sippings, in this time of need. Nature, in a temperate person, obtains fresh vigour and spirits from such exhilarating juices ; but where the constitution has been accustomed to excess, no advantage, in the decline of life, can be derived from their use.

I have now fulfilled my present design ; and through every letter have aimed at conveying my observations in a rational and amusing manner ; calculated, I hope, to please, at the same time that I wish to instruct. It is a topic which in different parts of it has been handled by very able men ; and yet has generally I believe been esteemed a dry subject, particularly by the ladies, to whom it essentially belongs.

This dislike seems, probably, to have arisen from the stile not being sufficiently void of terms of art; for the taste, as well as judgment, must be pleased, when we mean to encounter prejudices, and to correct long established errors.

It will give me a particular satisfaction, if I have so far succeeded in my undertaking, as that the present collection of letters may deserve a place in the ladies library; and perhaps this little volume may sometimes prove the companion of the nursery and sick chamber, or even afford an hour's amusement in a carriage.

It is intended, my fair, to render your characters truly amiable; and I trust will be received as a present from a sincere friend to the sex. Where tenderness, good nature, sense, and virtue, are beautifully blended in a female form, our admiration and love are equally engaged; and where this proves to be the case, every man is,

256 L E T T E R XV.

surely, desirous of contributing to the service of perfections so irresistibly engaging—such, at least, is the resolution of,

LADIES,

Your devoted

Humble servant,

March 20, 1774.

HUGH SMITH.

F I N I S.



Altham
18, Lucy Road
Newport

Med. Hist.

WZ

260

5648e

1785

c. 1

